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ANIMAL
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ANIMAL MAGNETISM:

ITS HISTORY TO THE PRESENT TIME.

WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE OF MESMER.

BY A SURGEON.

" There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
" Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."—HAMLET.

" But faith, fanatic faith, once wedded fast
" To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last."

LONDON:

G. B. DYER, 24, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1841.

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J. Haddon, Castle-street, Finsbury.

INTRODUCTION.

MESMERISM, or as it is more pertinently termed "Animal Magnetism," is at present but a doubtful speculation. The statements which have been made by its advocates, respecting the nature and effects of their newly discovered agency, are for the most part so irreconcileable with all the known laws of the human organization, and partake so much of the purely marvellous, as to have called forth every species of ridicule and abuse. Having, however, obtained the unswerving testimony and support of men of acknowledged wisdom and probity, and having been again and again subjected to apparent demonstration before the eyes of many witnesses, they have, in defiance of Herculean hostilities, at length elicited a large share of popular interest in this country; and, amidst conflicting opinions, each inquirer is anxious to form his own, as to whether animal magnetism is a matter of fact or fallacy. The object of this little work is to afford to the

general reader, more particularly, the means, as far as they have as yet been supplied, by which such a conclusion may be arrived at.

It may here be right to state, that the writer is not prepared to receive as facts *all* the statements, nor to assent to, "as proven," *all* the doctrines which Mesmerists have promulgated; not from a disinclination to reject in general whatever is seemingly incompatible, or even at variance with past experience, but because, in their zeal for their subject, Mesmerists appear in its support to have united with more worthy evidence, first, some facts which though genuine, are extraneous to it; and, secondly, others which have had no foundation, but in the brains of sagacious impostors and wits, or in the imaginations of weak-minded persons, fanatics, and idiots. The alleged effects of the Mesmeric fluid are so strikingly analogous to some forms under which functional disorders of the nervous system display themselves, as to make it in the highest degree probable that some phenomena which have been attributed to the former, have in reality belonged to the latter class; and indeed, a careful scrutiny of the authorized experiments leaves no

doubt of this source of fallacy, in the minds of those who are practically acquainted with the Protean vagaries of hysterical attacks and reveries.

It is the amount of mystery with which truth, when first detected, is naturally and afterwards artificially surrounded, that renders its separation, like fine gold from the ore, a process of so much difficulty; but for the toil, however severe, the smallest quantity, if it be but as "three grains of wheat in a bushel of chaff," will prove an ample reward.

All great discoveries have been in advance of the age which saw their dawning; and philosophy has never been more unworthy of its name, than when, as in many instances, it has arrayed itself in hostility against a new because startling doctrine. The successful pioneers in scientific discovery have been comparatively few, simply because the amount of moral courage essential to the formation of such a character has been rarely engaged in combination with a *due* proportion of the higher faculties of the mind. Entering upon his purpose, such an one has not only to encounter and dissipate the almost impenetrable shadows

which surround unrevealed truth, but to contend with a fearful and well-nigh overwhelming phalanx of mental, and sometimes bodily persecution, from those who, with himself, are confessedly the lovers and followers of science; against which nothing but the rescources of the most indomitable fortitude, and an almost superstitious conviction of truth can prevail. History is too well stored with such (alas! unheeded) instances; and the lives of Copernicus, Galileo, Harvey and others, martyrs of science, need not be resorted to for a confirmation of the fact. The wreaths that should have adorned their brows have yet to be gathered around their biers; and it is the glory of succeeding ages to recompense injured worth with the just meed of an honourable immortality.

"They fell *devoted*, but undying;
The very gale their names seemed sighing;
The waters murmured of their name;
The woods were peopled with their fame;
The silent pillar, lone and grey,
Claim'd kindred with their sacred clay;
Their spirits wrapp'd the dusky mountain;
Their memory sparkled o'er the fountain;
The meanest rill, the mightiest river,
Roll'd mingling with their fame for ever."

As for Mesmerism, if it has wanted the sanction of some great and learned men;—if it has had "heavy blows and great discouragement;"—if it has obtained a disadvantageous notoriety from its ready availableness for the purposes of impostors, and for the hallucinations of visionaries and madmen;—ruined some dupes, and made others;—it has had a noble army of illustrious defenders, some of whom have caused the choicest temples of science to ring with its pæans. Who can see amongst that band the names of a Lafayette, Cuvier, Andral, Rostan, Gall, Jussieu, Stewart, and others of equal celebrity since its rise to the present moment, and be informed that they have not relinquished the good opinion of Mesmerism which they once avowed, without feeling that the subject is, at all events, worthy of respectful consideration?

On the other hand it must not be forgotten that the most concentrated absurdities have been the philosophy of one age, and the ridicule of another; that alchymy, witchcraft, and astrology, with their herd of minor competitors for public confidence, have seduced wise men, and stolen a march upon the deliberations of

legislative assemblies; and that error has often for a time triumphed whilst truth has failed. "To surround any thing," says a living and forcible writer, "however monstrous or ridiculous, with an air of mystery, is to invest it with a secret charm and power of attraction which to the crowd is irresistible. False priests, false prophets, false doctors, false patriots, false prodigies of every kind, veiling their proceedings in mystery, have always addressed themselves at immense advantage to the popular credulity, and have been perhaps more indebted to that resource, in gaining and keeping for a time the upper hand of truth and common sense, than to any half-dozen items in the whole catalogue of imposture."*

To the sources collectively at which we have glanced, Mesmerism owes much of its present celebrity: it will be the object of the following pages impartially to decide if there be aught in the system itself which will guarantee for it more than a passing notoriety.

* Boz.

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

THE annals of animal magnetism, in common with those of medicine and chemistry, refer us back for its origin to the writings of Paracelsus and Van Helmont, who in all probability caught a glimpse of the wonders of the magnet from amidst the mysticisms of the Arabian philosophers, Geber and Avicenna. Of the strange works of Van Helmont, who was born at Brussels in 1577, there is one yet extant, entitled "A Dissertation on the Magnetic Cure of Wounds," which was written in reply to one Rodolf Goclenius, who had written several books on the healing of wounds by the sympathetic ointment of Paracelsus, and attempted to

prove that the cures were performed by natural, and not as V. Helmont affirmed, by magical causes. In the course of the refutation, the author pointed out the distinction between sympathy, fascination, and magnetism; and laid it down as an axiom, which afterwards became the foundation of the doctrines of the magnetists, that in connexion with the human body there is a principle which by an effort of the will can be made to exert itself so as to produce extraordinary effects on another living body, even at a remote distance. For the existence of such an influence Petrus Pomponatius, who was a professor of philosophy at Padua in the fifteenth century, had contended; but the statement does not appear to have become authority until it obtained the weightier sanction of Van Helmont. From this work we also learn, that Paracelsus had cured gout, jaundice, dropsy, and many other diseases, by means of the magnet, and that he made known the

facts as well as the processes by which his cures were wrought to his disciple, Dominick Balck, who afterwards practised as a magnetiser with varied success. It further appears, that the modern boast of Mesmerists,—ecstatic sleep and even clairvoyance—were known to Van Helmont, and produced at will through the agency of his magnets. One case he relates, of a lad, who during a state of magnetic sleep, gave a description of his father, who was at a distance of many miles, as if he were actually in his presence; and who, on awaking, was perfectly unconscious of what had occurred during the period of his slumber. These phenomena attracted the attention of Agrippa, Baptista Porta, Teutzelius, Wirdeg, Kircher, Maxwell, and others; but it was soon discovered that similar effects were produced by other causes, which fact led these philosophers to assent to the hypothesis of an universal magnetic fluid, independent of, although principally act-

ing through the medium of the mineral magnet, as the only means of solving this otherwise inexplicable enigma. A summary of the doctrines with which this theory was connected, may be found in a work by Maxwell, "De Medicinâ Magneticâ," in 1679, in which the author treats of the poles of the human body—of a flux and reflux of an universal fluid, forming a communication between the stars and organized beings by means of the nerves—of the magnetic influence of music — of the anima mundi — and of other equally absurd and foolish notions, which helped to form the basis of Mesmer's more perfected system.

The tide of utilitarianism had just begun to flow throughout Europe, sweeping before it that barren philosophy which had for so many ages employed the faculties of the ablest men; and making way for a new system, the object of which was the *good* of mankind. "Meditor," said Bacon, its great apostle,

"Meditor instaurationem philosophiæ ejusmodi quæ nihil inanis aut abstracti habeat, quæque vitæ humanæ conditiones in melius provehat."*

It now only required a man sufficiently bold to make the most preposterous assertions, and daring enough to put down all opposition by contempt;—who could possess himself of the public faith, and, as Goethe remarked, "would not hesitate to commit downright daylight depredations upon its resources," to turn these abstractedly visionary and fruitless speculations to the alleged "relief of man's" (not exempting his own) "estate;" and such was the aptitude of the subject, and such the nature of the human mind, that money and marvels were sure to follow, sufficient for his amplest coffers here, and his canonization hereafter.

The exact man appeared in the person of Frederick Anthony Mesmer, who was

* Redargutio Philosophiarum.

born, according to some, at Vienna, in the year 1740; according to others, at Werseburg, in Swabia, in 1734; whilst others assert his birthplace to have been in some part of Switzerland, with an uncertainty as to time and place. The delight of his earlier years consisted in the study of the writings of alchymists and astrologers: and the bent of his mind was further discovered in the choice of the following subject for his inaugural thesis, "The Influence of the Planets upon the Human Body," upon which he wrote an elaborate essay, which gained him his degree of doctor of medicine in the year 1766. Six years afterwards he announced *his* discovery of an universal fluid (obviously the same in every respect as that of which he had been informed in the works of the alchymists); which he stated to be "the immediate agent of all the phenomena of nature, in which life originates, and by which it is preserved." His notions with regard to

this fluid, and its relation to the human organization, appear to have been involved in some perplexity, until a circumstance occurred in the year 1776, which was eminently calculated to disclose the secret after which his own mind had in all probability been seeking. Whilst practising as a physician at Vienna, he happened to be present whilst blood was being drawn from a patient, and observed a remarkable difference in its flow according as he approached to or retired from it. The experiment was repeated, and the phenomena were again and again exhibited. Hence he was induced to conclude that his person was endowed with this magnetic influence, which might be stronger in him than in other men, as different pieces of steel may be found to possess different degrees of magnetic power. His next step was to assume that this influence had in it a therapeutic or curative power, against which no disease or scepticism

could prevail; and, finally, to discover and allege that he was not only gifted with a control over it superior in degree to that possessed by every other living being, but that he was the alone conservator and dispenser of its mighty and many virtues. With an ardent and avaricious spirit, a fair average of ready talents, and a strange want of diffidence, which gave him an almost unparalleled control over public credence, he ventured to make assertions which he clearly foresaw would be essential to the development and success of his unostentatious plans; and thus he commenced his more than marvellous career. "There is," said he, "one health, one disease, one remedy, and one physician; and that physician am I." This proclamation drew upon him the denunciations of the members of the medical profession in Germany, by whom he was pronounced an impostor; others looked upon him as a madman; whilst a few attempted to

gainsay his dogmatical arrogance in the arena of logical strife. Nothing daunted by this hostile array, Mesmer became but the more presumptuous; and on this occasion, as throughout life, his arrogance shone the more glaringly in proportion to the obstacles which in his course he had to encounter. Dr. Egg Von Ellekon, who made his acquaintance in 1804, relates the following anecdote of him, which affords ample testimony to the foregoing statement. In the course of their conversation on animal magnetism, Dr. E. expressed himself doubtful of its pretended effects upon the human system. Mesmer of course laboured hard to win over the waverer to his views; but the latter was obliged to confess that the more he saw, the less he believed. It seems he would have been a convert had not Mesmer prevented him by his extravagant sayings. As the two were one day walking together, Dr. E. asked the philosopher why he always

ordered his patients to bathe in river and not in spring-water? "Because river water is exposed to the sun's says." . . . "I know," observed the other, "that river water is sometimes warmed by the sun, but not so much so that you are not frequently obliged to warm it still more, and therefore I do not see why warm spring water should not often be preferable." "Dear doctor, the cause why all water which is exposed to the rays of the sun is superior to all other water is because it is magnetised. Twenty years ago *I magnetised* the sun," &c., &c.

Hitherto Mesmer had made use of mineral magnets exclusively for his experiments; but an event occurred which led to the substitution of his fingers as tractors, and thus to the manipulations in vogue at this day; at the same time affords an amusing instance of the professor's ready talent whenever occasion required its exercise. He had been taught the use of, and supplied with

magnets by a Jesuit, Maximilian Hel, a professor of astronomy at Vienna; who, when he saw the wondrous cures which by their agency Mesmer was effecting, publicly denounced his theory of an universal magnetic fluid, explained their properties by a theory of his own, and claimed to himself the merit of discovering their virtues. Mutual recriminations ensued; Hel accused Mesmer of appropriating to himself the honour and advantages of a discovery which he had made; and Mesmer reproached Hel with making use of the universal fluid, in which he was vested with the sole and entire proprietorship. The strife went on in favour of the Jesuit father, until Mesmer publicly pronounced his master's magnets to be useless, and made it appear that the magnetic fluid could be conveyed from one body to another without their intervention. Mesmer, in consequence, used his fingers with the same magic effects which were before accredited to the employment of mineral magnets

In the years 1775 and 1776, Mesmer visited the hospitals of Bavaria and Switzerland, and astonished the credulous natives by his mysterious exhibitions, and the equally mystic jargon with which he accompanied them. On his return to Vienna a circumstance transpired, which caused the tide of public opinion to set against him. In order the more effectively to enforce his doctrines, he adopted a course of dissembling; and gave out, with other equally wondrous cures, that he had by magnetism restored to perfect sight Mlle. Paradis, a celebrated singer, who was before blind. That lady publicly denied that there was any truth in the statement; other charges of deceit followed, to escape which, and at the express command of the empress, that "he should leave the capital within twenty-four hours," Mesmer removed to Paris in the year 1778. On his arrival he published a treatise, in which he attempted to solve the phenomena of animal magnetism on physical principles, with a view princi-

pally of clearing his character from the charges of quackery and imposture which had now begun seriously to assail it. In France, his reception was at first most favourable, and amongst his most ardent admirers and patrons we find the names of Lafayette and D'Epremenil; but, to the injury of his cause, he here had recourse to a new element in his mystic ordeals, viz., darkness, which could not but increase any latent suspicion that must have been floating abroad, that the whole system was chimerical, fraudulent, and degrading. Colquhoun states,* "In order, as it is supposed, to increase the efficacy of his treatment, the chamber in which he performed his operations and cures was darkened to a sort of twilight. Mirrors were placed around it, and a mysterious silence prevailed, interrupted by the tones of the armonica, an instrument upon

* Isis Revelata.

which Mesmer himself performed with great skill, or by those of the harpsicord."

Amongst those who joined the ranks of Mesmerists at this time in France, were Deslon, physician to the Count D'Artois, a man of sagacity, reputation, and rank, and Gibelin, author of the famous "Le Monde Primitif," a royal censor, honorary president of the Parisian Museum, and member of several learned societies. The confidence of Gibelin in Mesmer's system was so strong, that in sickness he sought its enchantments; and after one miraculous instance of curative skill, Gibelin broke out into the following rhapsody: "To whom do I, the author of 'Le Monde Primitif,' owe my existence? To Mesmer, the Saviour of men." It was not long after this that Gibelin died, in despite of the most strenuous efforts made by Mesmer to prolong his existence; and instantly the anti-mesmeric journals teemed with the

following sarcastic paragraph: "M. Count de Gibelin vient de mourir guéri par le magnetisme animal." Such patronage, however, increased the numbers of inquirers. The topics of conversation in all circles were Mesmer and his new system; proselytes increased; the most marvellous imaginings were accredited to this newly discovered agency; and society itself, like a child in the dark, stood half-witted by its own credulity. The sensation was indeed such, that "a royal mandate was issued on the 12th of March, 1784, to the medical faculty, requiring them to appoint commissioners to investigate the matter." Two commissions were in consequence formed, the one consisting of the following members of the Academy of Sciences—Franklin, Leroi, Bailly, De Bori, and Lavoisier; and of the following physicians—Majault, Sallin, D'Arcet, and Guillotin; and the other of the following members of the Society of Physicians—Poissonier, Des-

perrieres, Caille, Manduyt, Andry, and Jussieu.

The opinion of that committee was unfavourable to the Mesmerian doctrine; it stated that no such fluid exists as that for which the Mesmerists contend; but allowed that a certain influence is possessed by one individual over another, capable of producing some of its alleged results. The commissioners terminated their report thus :*

"That which we have learnt, or, at least, that which has been proved to us, in a clear and satisfactory manner, by our inquiry into the phenomena of Mesmerism, is—that *man can act upon man*, at all times and almost at will, by striking his imagination ;—that signs and gestures the most simple may produce the most powerful effects ; that the action of man upon the imagination may be reduced to

* Exposé des Expériences qui ont été faites pour l'Examen du Magnétisme Animal. Paris, 1784.

an art, and conducted after a certain method, when exercised upon patients who have faith in the proceedings."

Besides this, there was a secret report drawn up, which declared the practice of animal magnetism to have an immoral tendency, "and ought therefore to be prohibited." Notwithstanding this judicial procedure and the verdict, Mesmeric fury did not abate; old and young, rich and poor, flocked to the residence of the great sorcerer, and by his mystic legerdemain many were relieved of their misery, and most of their money. During this year, Mesmer acknowledged to his having received in fees the sum of 400,000 francs; and so spell-bound was the whole of the French nation by the artifices of this ingenious and audacious visionary, that the government, at the instance of Maurepas, the minister of the day, was at length led to offer him an annual stipend of 20,000 francs, together with 10,000 more for the erection of an establishment

for patients and pupils, on condition that he would remain in France. This offer was accompanied with a further provision on the part of the government; viz. that he should permit three persons of their own appointment to watch and report upon his proceedings; but with a promise, moreover, that the pecuniary advantages which should accrue to him from his acceptance of it, should not be annulled were the report of these examiners even to prove unfavourable to his system. But the prospect of future advantages now opening up to him was so extensive, and his ambitious spirit so restless of revelling unfettered beneath its bright and propitious sky, that such terms were rejected with the following characteristic reply. "The propositions made to me, seem to me to err in having my pecuniary interest, and not the importance of my discovery, for their principal object. If my discovery be *not* credited, it is evidently wrong to offer me for it a pension of

20,000 francs annually; if it be credited, the fate of humanity ought not to be sacrificed to the self-love of a few 'savans.'" At a later period he stated more clearly, if possible, his feelings with regard to this proposal of the French government, in the following language of bitter remonstrance. "He had always expected a recompense worthy of the French nation and of the monarch who governed it; that it was delicacy alone which indisposed him to receive a sum to defray the expenses of an establishment; and that he wished to hold as a direct gift from the munificence of the state, a territorial possession." "I well know," he adds, "that the sum which I demand is considerable; but I also know that my discovery is beyond all price. In the eyes of your majesty," he continues, addressing the king, "400 or 500,000 francs, *more or less*, well employed, are nothing; the happiness of your people is all. My discovery ought to be re-

ceived, and I recompensed with a munificence worthy of the monarch to whom I shall attach myself."* Foiled in his hopes that this appeal to the French government would be irresistible, the philosopher now determined to sell his secret, which he did to his disciples for an enormous sum; with which, and the proceeds of a subscription set on foot in France, partly for the purpose of rewarding himself, and partly with the view of diffusing a knowledge of his discovery in the principal cities, he retired to Spa. From this time the tinsel which had involved his true character and motives began to wear away; and the eyes which had been dimmed by its lustre now began to discover the mockery within. The system, apart from the man, was found to be little more than a shadow; and the oracle himself at length grew dumb. The ranks of his disciples daily became

* Précis Historique de la Découverte du Magnétisme Animal.

more thin, and many who had worshipped him "with all their worldly goods," now reproached him with having bestowed upon them nothing in return but the veriest delusion. Shrinking from the world, he became content to live in comparative obscurity, and his name appears only to have been brought upon its stage afresh in conjunction with the notice of his death, which took place in Switzerland, on the 5th of March, 1815.

The following extracts from a lecture on the character of Mesmer, delivered at Zurich, by his friend, Dr. Egg Von Ellikon, may be deemed impartial, and will complete our survey of the personal history of this at all events extraordinary man.

He describes him "as an old man of a venerable appearance, talkative (especially when the subject of conversation was his own merits and discoveries), and assuming towards his patients, and indeed whenever the practice of magnetism

was mentioned, an air of mystery which was altogether repulsive. He was accustomed to speak with the greatest contempt of those who differred from or opposed him, and was never tired of sounding his own praise, and of dwelling on the benefit which his magnetic discoveries had conferred on mankind. In his sitting room hung a painting in which he was represented as the good genius of the world, celebrating the triumph of animal magnetism over medical science. He was in the habit of presenting those who made his acquaintance with a print of himself, under which were some French verses, extolling him in the most fulsome terms. When his discoveries were the subject of discussion, he invariably finished it by a violent tirade against the ingratitude of the world, and the persecution he had suffered from the medical profession: medical men he called poisoners, and all their drugs, poisons; against all modern magnetisers,

too, he was highly incensed, accusing them either of not having been able to understand him, through their stupidity, or of having betrayed him. Bitter were his complaints that the somnambulisers were ruining the science, and doing more harm to the good cause than the most deadly blows of its most vehement adversaries. He said once to Dr. E., 'It is true I am old, and may yet live many years; but I know, for certain, that I should live ten years longer than I now shall do, if a surgeon had not once bled me when I was young.' Midwives and man-midwives he classed together under the name of privileged murderers of mankind. The tying of the umbilical cord he held to be the cause of small-pox and all hepatic diseases, under which he classed almost every chronic malady. Beyond his own theory and pretended discovery, he knew and cared about nothing; his reading was confined to two or three newspapers; of the progress

of science he was altogether ignorant; and even his political opinions, strange to say, were modified by his peculiar views, and he actually advocated a political revolution and reorganization on magnetical principles."*

The foregoing sketch of the life of Mesmer has been briefly and (it is trusted) faithfully given, as it discloses much that is necessary to be known for the formation of a correct estimate of the system with which his name has been inseparably connected as that of its author and patron. The circumstances out of which the germs of any system of philosophy are evolved, or by which their growing tendency are accelerated, *must* impart to it either certain features, indicative of its intrinsic worth and purity; or elements, foreign to the interests of science and the advancement of truth. On this ground the discoveries

* Quarterly Review.

and doctrines of Mesmer cannot bear with them those circumstantial claims upon public reception which characterised the works of Newton, Locke, and Bacon. His resolute defiance of common sense—his entire want of that simplicity which has ever distinguished and adorned nobler minds—his braggart self-idolatry —his cowardly contempt of those with whom he differed in opinion—his dernier equivocations—his petulant temper and sordid disposition, cannot but throw around his pretensions an alienating rather than an engaging exterior; and cause any submission to his views to be forced rather than yielded. It would, however, be held to be "passing strange" if all the commotion which Mesmer and his followers have produced, should have been the sport of airy speculations, the vibrations of a moral atmosphere, impressed upon it by the bursting of a bubble. Such an assumption is unwarrantable; and amidst all the absurdi-

ties that Mesmer broached, there may on a dispassionate examination be found to be a grain of "sterner stuff."

Mesmer's fraudulent hypothesis (it has been remarked) was framed, without doubt, from the speculations of the older philosophers. The Archæus of Van Helmont, the "Anima" of Stahl, and the Πνευματα of Galen, were phrases intended to express an active immaterial principle, producing and controlling the actions of the system, by an action neither chemical nor mechanical, but in fact identical with life itself. "It was the need and effort," says Dr. Chambers, "to find something intervening between mind and body—some middle agency that might give a show of explanation of the actions of the former upon the latter—which suggested these terms and gave a sort of reality to them."

Passing through various mental media, according to the age, this principle has been made to assume as many ideal

transformations. For instance, the subtlety of the magnetic fluid, and the similarity of its operations upon the living organism to some of those which had been ascribed to the "anima," were sufficient grounds for inducing and supporting the belief that between these two influences a very close affinity existed;—in short, that they were absolutely identical; and thus took place its transformation into the "Medicina Magnetica" of Maxwell. Astrologers, too, had announced the discovery of another equally occult principle, by virtue of which our planet and its inhabitants had been from the beginning subordinated to the movements of the starry world; and this assumption helped to complete the more comprehensive theory into which the "Anima" was by Mesmer again and ultimately transformed. The hypothesis upon which his curative procedure was built, was as follows. "That the entire universe was plunged, as it were, into a vast ocean of fluid, which

penetrates it throughout, and produces in it all the phenomena which we observe around us. This fluid is the medium of an influence which the heavenly bodies, the earth, and animated nature, constantly exercise upon each other. The human body has properties analogous to those of the magnet; it has poles 'également diverses et opposées;' and it can operate upon the universal fluid." Then adapting his theory to his own immediate and secular purposes, he proceeds to state, that "By means of magnetism the physician is acquainted with the state of health of every individual, and perceives with certainty the origin, nature, and progress of the most complicated maladies; it prevents their increase and effects their cure without exposing the patient of whatever age, temperament, or sex, to any danger. Nature offers in animal magnetism, a universal method for curing and preserving mankind."

The mode of applying the fluid which

Mesmer adopted, and the effects, was as follows :—

" In the centre of the chamber was a kind of tub, several feet in depth, having a cover, with two lids pierced with holes, through which curved and moveable iron rods were passed. The interior was filled with bottles full of water which had been previously magnetised. These bottles were placed in rows, one above the other, so disposed as that the necks of those in one tier were turned towards the centre of the vessel, and their other end towards the circumference; whilst those in the next tier were in the reverse position. The vessel also contained a certain quantity of water, filling up the spaces caused by the disposition of the bottles; but it was not indispensable that every thing should be precisely as above detailed. Sometimes iron filings, ground glass, sulphur, manganese, and many other substances, were put into the water.

" The patients were placed round the

apparatus, and directed the iron rods to the parts affected. Sometimes the body was encircled by a hoop suspended from above. They occasionally formed what was called the *chain*, by holding each other by the thumb and fore finger. The magnetiser, armed with an iron rod, which he passed over his patients, appeared to direct at will the course of the magnetic fluid. All this apparatus of water, bottles, and metallic rods, was supposed to be essential to the disengagement of the magnetic agent. Sometimes the operation was accompanied by the notes of a piano or armonica; for it was one of the propositions of Mesmer, that the propagation of magnetism was especially assisted by sound.

"These processes formed the basis of the treatment applied to several individuals together. Magnetism could also be exercised in various different ways. The universal fluid being every where, the magnetiser contained a portion of it in

himself, which he had the power of communicating and directing by a rod, or by the movement of his extended fingers. In addition to these gestures, performed without coming in contact with the patients, it was customary to touch gently the hypochondria, the epigastric region, or the limbs. To add to the effect of these operations, trees, water, articles of food, or other objects, were also magnetised; for all bodies in nature, according to Mesmer, were susceptible of magnetism.

"The patients submitted to this magnetisation experienced various unusual sensations, wandering pains all over the body, but especially in the head and stomach; the augmentation or the suppression of the cutaneous perspiration; palpitations of the heart, and momentary suffocation; sometimes a certain exaltation of the mental faculties, and a vivid sensation of comfort and enjoyment. The nervous system appeared to be more especially affected; the organs of the

senses experienced unusual modifications, such as tingling in the ears, dizziness, and sometimes a kind of somnolency of a peculiar character. These effects, varying infinitely according to the nature of the disease, and the idiosyncracy of the invalids, continued increasing in proportion to the duration of the magnetisation, and this series of phenomena terminated also by the most remarkable and most constant of all, viz. convulsions. The convulsive state once excited in a patient, which sometimes did not take place till after several hours, never failed to manifest itself in all the others. This was designated by the term of the *magnetic crisis*. As this crisis was usually the *dénouement* of the effects produced, it was considered as the object of the magnetic action, and as the means employed by nature to produce the cure.

"The convulsions were alarming by their violence and duration. The patients, when seized by them, were immediately

carried into a neighbouring apartment, called, on account of its destination, the *Crisis Chamber*, where they gradually came to themselves. One very remarkable circumstance was, that on their recovery they felt only a slight sensation of fatigue, and several even professed to have received a decided relief.

"To these physiological results were joined some very extraordinary moral phenomena. Some laughed violently, whilst others, submitted to exactly the same mode of treatment, shed tears. They were frequently drawn towards each other by irresistible impulses of sympathy, and reciprocally testified the warmest affection. But what was most surprising was the prodigious influence possessed by the magnetiser over his patients. An intimation of his will excited or calmed the convulsions; commanded love or hatred; his rod seemed like a magic instrument, to which body and spirit yielded obedience. These astonishing results were also pro-

duced, although in a less degree, when he operated on individuals separately."

Probably in the whole history of animal magnetism, a more imposing process of applying the fluid has not been recorded, unless we believe and except the following account, elicited from a somnambulist patient of Dr. Mertin's, of Berlin; which we are induced to give for the sake of contrast. This patient was thrown into a state of magnetic sleep, and asked "whether magnetism had been used in the most ancient times, before the birth of Christ, and particularly by the Egyptians?" She gave the following reply, "*after a pause:*"—

"In a wide and sandy plain, where the air is pure and salubrious, at some distance from a large town, I see a temple, where physicians *or priests* are healing the sick. These are the Egyptians. The temple is of wood, rests on four pillars, and is entered by a flight of stone steps. It fronts the east. . . . . Now I

enter a magnificent hall, on the middle of the dome of which there is a half moon and numerous stars. There are no windows, but round openings covered with green cloth, to diminish the intensity of the light. . . . . Round along the wall are eighteen beds for invalids, or rather for sleepers, whom I see lying in them. The bedsteads as well as the pillows are stuffed with herbs. The beds are placed two and two, their heads towards the centre of the hall; a little nearer which is a circle of nine polished, shining, hollow, iron pillars, about three inches in diameter and three feet high. Each pillar stands on a triangular pedestal, which is filled with herbs; but the pillar itself contains quicksilver. The pillars are connected by a chain, and another chain intersects the circle which they form: along the latter sit patients, grasping it with one hand, with their backs towards the pillars, and holding with the other hand a ball with a cross

projecting from it, three inches in diameter, hollow, and filled with herbs; it looks like marble, but of what it is composed I cannot say. I see physicians with polished hollow iron rods, filled also with herbs, touching with them the parts affected of the patients. Two priests walk towards each other from the end of the chain, performing the treatment; and all the physicians keep touching the chain with balls like those of the patients, and shaking it. All the persons whom I see are clothed in white garments, and the priests wear a girdle around the body, which is buckled with a half moon in front, and on which are the figures of nine stars. The treatment of the patients is a religious rite, is only performed in the evening, and is best undertaken by moonlight. On the eastern side of the dome is a large opening, through which the moon pours her light into the interior of the building. There is another opening, which the priests make use of for watching the

motions of the stars; for it is necessary to the perfection of their medical practice that they should be good astronomers and astrologers. They all live in celibacy, and choose the eldest amongst them for their chief or king, whose brow is encircled by a crown, and who sways in his hand the ball and staff, (from which, probably, the form of the modern regal sceptre is derived.) . . . This temple lies near a large town, past which flows a river whose waters are of a reddish hue. At the present day," she added, "perhaps not a trace of this temple or city remains."

"The moon, this patient and her physician both state, had a particular influence upon her. 'For seven years she was afflicted to madness by a nervous headache, of which she was at last cured by four months' magnetic treatment. When she experienced its attacks she went, at first driven by some instinctive compulsion, and afterwards voluntarily, to a mountain near her residence, on which she seated

herself, and allowed the moon to shine upon her. She never did this without finding that it relieved her pains in the head.' "

These operations of Mesmer, with their effects, were to constitute the subject of inquiry for the commission of 1784:* and M. D'Eslon, his pupil, undertook to exhibit them before its members. His experiments proceeded most satisfactorily to himself; but one or two failures occurred which shook the faith of the commissioners, and led them to the conclusions embodied in their report.

"Two females, who had shown the greatest sensibility to magnetism, were placed in separate apartments; one of them remained with three of the commissioners, she had her eyes blindfolded, during which one of the commissioners represented M. D'Eslon, and was addressed by the others as such, and various

* See p. 15, 16, and 17.

questions put to him, which led the female to believe he was proceeding with the operation. She commenced in three minutes to feel a nervous shivering, she soon became stiff, complained of pain, and the convulsive crisis came on; during the whole of the time not one of the commissioners moved hand or foot, but remained perfectly quiet, and nothing was done that could have had the slightest magnetic influence. The other female was in another room with the two commissioners. She was made to believe that M. D'Eslon was magnetising her, and the effects very quickly became visible; her breathing was hurried; she threw her arms about, bent her body forward, and the whole body trembled, the chattering of her teeth became so loud that it was heard in another room, and so violent was she that she bit her hand so as to leave the impression of her teeth upon it."

On another occasion he undertook to demonstrate to the yet sceptical commis-

sioners, that he could magnetise an apricot tree in an orchard at Passy, near Paris, which should throw one of his patients into a crisis as soon as he touched it. The patient, with his eyes bandaged, was led from tree to tree, and unfortunately undertook the semblances of a fit under one at least 24 feet from that which D'Eslon had manipulated. To explain this mistake D'Eslon insisted that the apricot tree had communicated its magnetic powers to all the other trees in the orchard; and that evidences of that fact had been shown by the patient as he approached to each, although the explanation did not appear so plain to the commissioners as to induce them to alter their opinions.

Jussieu, the celebrated botanist, and Bailly, took the most prominent and active part in this investigation, in which Dr. Franklin, who was then Ambassador at Paris from the United States, was prevented by indisposition from sharing.

The public report was drawn up by Bailly, and declared that the commissioners were of opinion that no such influence as magnetism, capable of transmission from one individual to another, exists; that all the phenomena attributed to it might be explained by known causes; that imagination, animal heat, excitement (l'erethisme) of the skin, and imitation, were the only agents employed by Mesmer: and that the pretended discovery of animal magnetism was a *German* reverie, to be classed with the numerous other reveries which appear and vanish in every age. The members of the commission were not, however, unanimous in this opinion: Jussieu dissented from his colleagues, and refused, in defiance of much entreaty and remonstrance, to sign the report. He fearlessly published a separate opinion, in which he declared that to account for the phenomena witnessed by him and the other commissioners, it was necessary to admit the existence of *some* agent inde-

pendent either of the influence of imagination or of any known physiological laws. The confidence of the public in the accuracy and impartiality of this report, became evident by the ridicule with which it was now for a season treated, and the general languor with respect to Mesmerism which followed.

Dr. Willich, of London, in a work "On Diet and Regimen, 1799," refers to it in the following language:—

"The philosophers" (of the French commission), "amongst whom we find the illustrious names of Franklin and Lavoisier, recognised indeed very surprising and unexpected phenomena in the physical state of magnetised individuals; but they gave it as their opinion that the imagination and not animal magnetism had produced these effects. Sensible of the superior influence which the imagination exerts in the human body, when it is effectually wrought upon, they perceived, after a number of experiments and facts

frequently repeated, that contact or touch, imagination, imitation, and excited sensibility, were the real and sole causes of these phenomena which had so confounded the illiterate, the credulous, and the enthusiastic—that the boasted magnetic element had no real existence in nature; consequently that Mesmer was either an arrant impostor, or a deceived fanatic." Dr. W. afterwards observes, "It is no small proof of the good sense of the people of this country, that the professors of this fanatical art could not long maintain their ground, and that the few who are still left, to the disgrace of the credulous, are now banished to the dark alleys and obscure cellars of the metropolis."

From these accounts, and the secret report of the commissioners (to which reference has already been made*), which cannot be published for popular use, it is

* See p. 17.

but too obvious (supposing the alleged magnetic fluid to exist) that the artfulness of Mesmer, and the enthusiasm of his immediate followers, led them to regard as magnetism the various means by which a high or morbid state of sensibility may be raised to a state of excitement bordering on ecstasy or temporary frenzy; and to make exhibitions, even inconsistent with ordinary decorum, and understood only by themselves, which should awe the uninitiated into a belief of the actual existence of the power which they pretended to have discovered, and to be alone able to wield.

Mesmerism for a season took its leave of the continent, and found refuge in England, where it was introduced by Maineduc, a pupil of D'Eslon's, in the year 1785. This doctor published a pamphlet upon the subject, with the very irresistible title, "Proposals to the Ladies;" in which he states that Mesmer revived the science from the

ashes of the ancients, and that he (Maineduc) offered him 4000 guineas for the secret, but that Mesmer found it to be valuable beyond that price, and consequently rejected the proposal. Maineduc, however, like another Prometheus, filched the mystery, and by giving instructions to earnest pupils, and performing cures, at length realized, it is said, £100,000. Such golden success tempted others into the same paths, and we accordingly find the names of Dr. Cue, Mr. Parker, Dr. Bell, Holloway, and others, on the roll of Mesmerians, who, whilst they satisfied and ere they had satiated public curiosity, did, as their predecessors had done, equal satisfaction to their own capacious purses. The miraculous performances of these professors of the art were, however, eclipsed by those of Mr. and Mrs. De Lauterbourg, who, in 1789, practised Mesmerism at Hammersmith Terrace; and, "as the story goes," cured two thousand people in six months. They

were not particular in selecting cases, but restored indiscriminately the deaf, dumb, halt, lame, and blind; young men dying with scrofula, and young women possessed with devils. Such were the impressions which these people made, that a Mrs. Pratt, who had herself been a miracle of their skill, addressed the primate in a pamphlet entitled "A List of New Cures performed by Mr. and Mrs. Lauterbourg without Medicine, by a Lover of the Lamb of God; dedicated to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury;" announcing that both Mr. and Mrs. Lauterbourg had been rendered by God "proper recipients to receive divine manuductions." "Let us join," she continued, "in prayer and praise to have this most glorious blessing continued, lest our candlestick be removed from us, which I most ardently pray the Lord Jehovah to avert." As a specimen of their treatment, and the success with which it was invariably attended, we subjoin the following

from the medical report of Mrs. Pratt, their worthy confederate.

"Mrs. Hook, Stable-yard, St. James', has two daughters born deaf and dumb. She waited on Mrs. De Lauterbourg, who looked at them with an eye of benignity, and healed them. I heard them both speak."

These crazy-headed persons, or may be, arch-impostors of the same genus with Swedenborg, Southcote, and Perkins, with their cunning artifices, for purposes of the most barefaced empiricism, obtain a passing notice but to show that the amount of public credence, be it ever so large, that any system obtains, is of itself an insufficient test of its real and intrinsic merits. Public credulity is ever at its post; and may be, as it ever has been, most successfully overreached by the basest fraud, if it be but constructed so as to engage curiosity by its novelty; inspire hope by its pretensions; and elude discovery by its mystic envelopements.

Hitherto the phenomena ascribed to the influence of animal magnetism had received but little thought or investigation with a view to its establishment as a science; hence *that* term, or Mesmerism, was applied to the whole series indefinitely; but whilst the French commissioners were in the act of preparing their report, it occurred to a zealous Mesmerian, the Baron De Puysegur, that the magnetic fluid, whilst it had the effect of completely or partially suspending man's physical faculties, might leave his intellectual powers not only unimpaired, but advantaged;—that it might produce "an action of the external apparatus of the senses, coexistent with the life and activity of some inner source of feeling."* He accordingly interrogated his patients whilst in a state of magnetic sleep, and found, to his delight and astonishment, that they replied to his questions without showing any symptoms of

* Townshend.

returning wakefulness. Dupotet's announcement of this discovery is as follows: "It was at Busancy, near Poissons, that *somnambulism* originally presented itself, with *all* its wonders," and "people hastened from all parts to witness so singular a phenomena." . . . "Wherever somnambulism could be produced, the admiration inspired by this strange phenomenon was so great, that those who presented it were considered as oracles, and the enthusiasm of those who witnessed such scenes knew no bounds." The earliest account of this discovery was given by a M. Cloquet, receiver of finance, in 1782.

"Attracted like others to this spectacle," says Cloquet, "I went prepared to be a calm and impartial observer, firmly resolved to be on my guard against the illusions of novelty and of wonder; firmly resolved both to look and to listen well."

M. Cloquet, after having described

the proceedings employed by M. de Puysegur for acting upon the patients, and having related various scenes of magnetisation, adds—"The consummation of this state (the magnetic state) is an appearance of sleep, during which the physical faculties seem to be suspended, but to the advantage of the intellectual faculties. The eyes of the subject are closed: his sense of hearing is null; he wakes only at the sight of the master (*du maitre*). No one should touch the patient during a crisis, not even the chair on which he is seated; it would cause him much suffering and convulsions, which the master only can calm.

"These patients, during the crisis, possess an extraordinary (*surnaturel*) power, by which, on touching a patient presented to them, on passing their hand even over the clothes, they feel which is the affected viscus—the suffering part; they point it out, and indicate pretty nearly the suitable remedies.

"One singularity not less remarkable than all that I have just disclosed is, that these sleepers, who during four hours have touched patients, have reasoned with them, remember nothing, absolutely nothing, after the master has throught proper to disenchant them—to restore them to their natural state. The time that has elapsed between their entering into the crisis and that of their coming out of it, is as it were null. The master has the power, not only, as I have already said, of making himself heard by these somnambulists, but I have frequently seen him, (observing him all the time with the utmost vigilance), I have seen him point his finger from a distance to individuals while in the crisis, and in a state of spasmodic sleep, and make them follow him wherever he chose; or send them from him, either to their own homes, or to different places which he designed, with telling them,—the somnambulists, it should be remembered,

having their eyes the whole time completely closed. I have forgotten to mention, that the intelligence of these patients is singularly susceptible. If, at distances by no means inconsiderable, conversation is held offensive to propriety, they hear it as it were internally, their minds are disagreeably affected by it, they complain of it, and inform the master of the circumstance; and this has several times occasioned scenes of confusion to ill-witted jesters (*pour les mauvais plaisants*), who indulged, at M. de Puysegur's residence, in inconsiderate and misplaced sarcasms. In order to awaken the somnambulists, the master has only to pass his fingers over their eyes."

This discovery of De Puysegur was at this time of the highest importance to Mesmerism; and in all probability rescued it from that oblivion to which, owing to the judicial proceedings of the commissioners of 1784, it was fast tending. In somnambulism, sleepwalking, or as Dr.

Elliotson has since named it, "sleep-waking," Puysegur detected a condition sufficiently constant in its production and exact in its phases in each individual case, to warrant his claiming it as the veritable result of Mesmeric agency, and of that alone; and paradoxical enough to suit the most sublime and mysterious subject. Hitherto the sceptic might justly have referred to the heterodox amalgamation of the various feats of fanaticism, reverie, hysteria, sympathy, ecstasy, and their ghostly coadjutors, the pretended phenomena of Mesmerism, as the best arguments in disproof of its existence; but somnambulism presented a state (as Puysegur contended) which wanted the chief characteristic of all these functional disorders of the nervous system, viz., their variableness; and on that account alone had every right to be attributed to a different origin. At length Puysegur, too, became an enthusiast, and from the vantage ground of sober reason

was decoyed away in pursuit of his fancied and shadowy treasure, as by a will-o'the-wisp meteor, into quagmires of folly and chagrin. Amongst the subjects of his experiments was a peasant, who, he says, was idiotic when awake, but who, when somnambulised, gave astonishing proofs of intelligence and judgment. So fascinated was he with his prodigy, that he was accustomed to call him his "intelligence," for whom "it is impossible to find a name:" "when in a crisis," he continues, "I know no one more profound, more prudent, more clairvoyant than he is." The conclusions to which Puysegur finally arrived were, that animal magnetism was intended for the moral as well as physical regeneration of man; that its benefits are to be communicated through the medium of the nervous system; but that it is only through the exercise of unbounded confidence on the part of the patient that the magnetiser is enabled to bring him under its control.

From the following incident, related in the memoirs of Mr. Wilberforce, the *kind* of reputation which Mesmerism enjoyed on the continent previous to its condemnation, may be gathered. Whilst at Nice, in 1784, with his tutor, the late Dr. Milner, Mr. W. met Frederick North, with whom and Milner he resorted to the chief operator there, M. Toalag, to be magnetised. Mr. W. says—"Neither of us felt any thing, owing perhaps to our incredulity. North, on the contrary, would fall down upon entering the room in which they practised on him; and he even maintained to me that they could affect the frame though in another room, or at a distance, and you were ignorant of their proceedings."*

The French revolution and war which followed too much engrossed the public mind, to permit of its being to a noticeable degree occupied by the feats and fancies of what was at the best but an embryonic speculation; we accordingly

* Wilberforce's Memoirs, vol. i. p. 73.

find that during the whole of this period, Mesmerism had but few avowed champions, especially on the continent; and made but little inroad on public favour. In 1811 it began to revive; and among those who entered the lists on its behalf we find the name of Kluge, the principal surgeon to the Prussian Medico-chirurgical Pepinière; a man whose opinions must ever obtain consideration from the high respectability of his character and station. He inclined to a belief in the existence of a nervous atmosphere, which is the agent in all magnetic operations; that this fluid can be accumulated by some individuals, and discharged like the electricity of the torpedo; and that over its direction the passions and will have a decided control. Amongst his illustrations of the results of this state of things, the following "instance" is found.

"A French nobleman of high rank, during a visit to London, produced such a remarkable effect upon a young shoemaker, of whom he had ordered a pair of

shoes, that the latter became senseless, fainted, and bled at the nose, both when he took the measure and when he brought the shoes to be tried on. Surprised by the repetition of this scene, De la Tour made inquiries respecting his extraction, and found that he was born in France, but had been taken in his childhood first to Bohemia, and then to Holland. He now recollected that the son of a sister of his, who had died in childbed, had been consigned, immediately on her decease, to a nurse, of whom and of her charge, nothing had been heard since that time. He also remembered, that the child was born with a remarkable mole between his shoulders. He instantly examined the young shoemaker, found that he bore the above mark, and convinced himself, after a few rigorous inquiries, that this person was no other than his nephew, the Baron de Vesins."

It is obvious from this narrative, that Kluge's notions respecting this "nervous atmosphere," differed from preceding

magnetists; and in fact were more nearly allied to the sympathetic doctrine of Sir Kenelm Digby. For instance, Kluge states that an emetic, taken by a magnetiser during his manipulations, would create a wondrous "fellow feeling" in his patient's stomach; and that the ticking of a watch placed at his right ear *was* heard by the left of his somnambulist, who was at a great distance. Sir Kenelm, by the application of *his* "sympathetic powder" to the bloody vesture, caused the wounds of men afar off presently to be healed.

It would be impossible in a work of this size to give so much as an outline of *all* the views which have been entertained and published respecting this subject; but in tracing its history, the most important phases which it presented may be cursorily glanced at. Six years after Kluge had publicly broached his opinions, we find some of a more startling nature in a work entitled "Considerations on Animal Magnetism, especially in regard

to Numerous Phenomena of the Past and Present connected with it; by J. A. L. Richter, Con-rector of the principal Ducal School at Dessau." This instructor of youth permitted his fascination with his subject to carry his theorising spirit far beyond the boundaries of sense, and by the aid of magnetism to unfold mysteries, the lowest of which in later days Mr. Babbage, by his machine, has been proudly content to solve. Richter states that magnetism "consists in nothing less than in the solution of many enigmas of human existence; and particularly of those which appertain especially to Christianity; on the obscure and mysterious parts of which a light is now thrown which permits us clearly to gaze." All the miracles of the New Testament were, according to our author, performed by means of this extraordinary agency, as well as the marvels and witchcraft which abounded in the darkest parts of the middle ages; in short all the

events that have occurred, and have been deemed unaccountable, are by a fell sweep of Richter's adjudicative authority resolved into the workings of this principle, which he esteems to be nothing short of Omnipotence itself. And in a fit of impetuous admiration, or rather adoration, of Mesmerism, he declares his conviction that Adam, St. Paul, Luther, Jesus Christ, and even the Deity himself, are to be regarded but as so many magnetists. It is needless to add that by all the brotherhood who had a rightful claim of exemption from the charge of lunacy, the impious ranting of this fanatic was and has been repudiated. Another of the revivers of animal magnetism in France at the time now under review, was Deleuze, librarian and professor of natural history at the Jardin des Plantes, whose opinions respecting its source and operations have a semblance to those which Kluge professed. He says, "I believe in an emanation

from myself, because magnetic results are produced without my touching the patient; ex nihilo nil. I am ignorant of the nature of this emanation; I do not know whether it is material or spiritual, nor to what distance it may be made to to extend; but this I know, that it is discharged and directed by my will, for when I cease to will, it ceases to act." This extract is from a work by Deleuze, entitled "Histoire Critique du Magnétisme," which claims to be regarded as one of the most forcible and well written appeals on the subject that have appeared. His opinions were weighty, and from the fresh stimulus which they gave to the doctrines of Mesmerism, he lost caste with the members of the French Institute, and in opposition to his entreaties and acknowledged qualifications for the honour of admission amongst their number, was denied it. At this period, it would appear from Deleuze, that much of the efficacy of the magnetic operations

was attributable to the concentrated efforts of the will. In addition to the statements to this effect which have already been made, we might, did our space permit, quote many more; two shall suffice. It is necessary, says another magnetiser, M. Georget, author of a work on the physiology of the brain, that both the magnetiser and magnetised should direct as intently as possible all their cerebral action towards the production of somnambulism; and that both should will or desire that it be brought about. And Baron Dupotet states, "that the operation may be said to be almost purely intellectual; its success depending on the energy of the will."*

The formation of an academical society of magnetisers about this time, with Puysegur as its president, together with the favourable opinions respecting Mesmerism which Ampère, La Place, and Cuvier had expressed, elicited an increased share of

* Dupotet, p. 151.

the attention of men of science; and supplied the daily press with extravagant rumours as well as sage deliberations. By the common consent of Mesmerists, epileptic patients were pronounced to be more susceptible of magnetic influence than individuals in health; and accordingly the hospitals were suggested as admirably fitted to be the theatres for experiments, which were to be more decisive as to the merits and claims of magnetism. The doors of the Hôtel-Dieu at Paris were thrown open to Dupotet, who published an account of his success amongst the inmates of that institution in a pamphlet, the contents of which were attested by Husson, Geoffrey, Recamier, and other medical men, who were present at his operations. Three editions of this pamphlet were quickly disposed of. At La Pitie, La Salpetriere (a hospital for diseases of the brain), La Charité, Bicêtre (an hospital for lunatics), and Val-de-Grace, these

investigations were also pursued with determined zeal in the presence of Rostan, Esquirol, and Brouissais, names sufficiently identified with the cause of truth and science to give these proceedings an air of seriousness and importance. These eminent physicians were convinced, and subsequently became warm partizans in the cause. A young physician, attached to the Hospital Val-de-Grace, named Desruelles, submitted himself on one of these occasions to magnetisation, and the action is said by the operator (Dupotet) to have been so strong, that after a few minutes he was obliged to desist. During the years 1818—1823, Wolfart, in Germany, published his "Annals of Vital Magnetism," which contained a mass of evidence in favor of Mesmerism, collected from all reputable sources. Of the illustrations, some are grave enough for any purpose; but others are so ludicrous, and possessed of so much magnetism, as to be capable

of exciting risibility in the sternest and most obstinate aspects. He divided the phenomena generally induced by Mesmerian tactics into five classes; viz. 1. Sensations, agreeable or otherwise; 2. Alteration of temperature; 3. Convulsions; 4. Increase of secretions; 5. Changes of tone in the vitality of the senses, and of the brain, amongst which somnambulism may sometimes occur. At Fontainebleau, the Marquis de la Roche Jacquelin, colonel of a cavalry regiment thereat garrisoned, in order to refute the assertion of the incredulous anti-Mesmerists, that the influence of the imagination was equal to the production of all the phenomena they had seen, offered to Mesmerise his horses; and we are given to understand that these sagacious animals took upon themselves, in obedience to the manipulations of the marquis, and to the honour of his cause, all the usual magnetic phases, even to somnambulism. These combined

proceedings once more drew the attention of the Academy of Medicine, and the question was re-opened by another commission, on the following grounds: first, that the public interest in the proceedings of the votaries of Mesmerism had been re-awakened with new zeal; second, that the proceedings and report of the committee of 1784 were partial, unfair, and not unanimously adopted; and third, that since that time new facts of much importance in testing its reality had been elicited. Induced by these considerations, the Royal Academy of Medicine appointed a committee, composed of Marc, Bourdois, Double, Itard, Gueneau, De Hussy, Guersent, Fouquier, Leroux, Majendie, Thellage, and Husson, who was chosen to be their president.

The committee devoted five years to the prosecution of their inquiries, and adopted a resolution not to advert in their report to any facts or phenomena which did not come under their own immediate observa-

tion. To this resolution they adhered, with a single exception, which was made in order to admit an important case amongst the materials for their discussion, the well authenticated instance (to which we shall hereafter refer) of Madame Plantin. During these five years, they made numerous experiments, in some of which no obvious effect was produced; in others, the effects were slight, whilst in several all the higher developments of magnetic power are said to have been evolved. Amongst the individuals experimented upon, was Itard, a member of the committee; and although none of the more striking phenomena were perceptible, some decided and unequivocal results were produced; which the committee could not attribute to the influence of the imagination or other known physiological agency. The following are extracts from the report of the committee, the members of which have been named.

Baron Dupotet says—

"On the 27th of October, 1827, I was called by the committee to make experiments upon some patients at the academy itself. No patients were there. It was an ingenious mode of inviting me to practise on the commissioners. I complied with pleasure. M. Itard, physician to the deaf and dumb, and a member of the Academy, was the first who submitted himself to magnetisation."

The reporter, alluding to the experiments upon this gentleman, says—"A more decided magnetic action was observed on a member of the committee, M. Itard, magnetised by M. Dupotet; he felt a heaviness without sleeping, a decided *agacement* of the nerves of the face, convulsive motions in the alæ of the nose, in the muscles of the face, and of the jaws. A flow of saliva in the mouth, which had a metallic taste, a sensation similar to that which he had experienced

from galvanism. The following experiments excited cephalalgia, which lasted several hours, and at the same time *the habitual pains* greatly diminished."

And adds—

"It is not upon men of our age, and, like us, always on their guard against the errors of our *esprit* and of our senses, that imagination can have much influence. At our period of life it is enlightened by reason, and freed from those illusions by which youth is so easily seduced: at our age it is ever on the watch, and distrust, rather than confidence, presides over the various operations of our minds. These circumstances are happily united in our colleague, and the Academy knows him too well not to admit that what he professes to have felt he really did experience," &c.

"M. Petit was magnetised, in presence of the committee, on the 15th March, 1826, and set asleep in the space of a minute. A candle was constantly held, during the

experiments, before the eyes of M. Petit, at a distance of one or two inches, and several persons had their eyes constantly fixed on his. None of us could perceive the slightest separation of the eyelids. M. Ribes, indeed, remarked that their edges were superimposed, so that the eyelashes crossed each other.

"M. Ribes, member of the Academy, presented a catalogue which he took from his pocket. The somnambulist, after some efforts, which seemed to fatigue him, read very distinctly, the words, 'Lavater. Il est bien difficile de connaitre les hommes, &c.'" . . . "A closed letter was presented to him: he could not discover any of its contents, though he followed the direction of the lines with his fingers. But he easily read the address, though it contained a pretty difficult name." . . . "We never ceased to examine the eyes, and to hold a candle near them;" . . . "as far as it was possible to judge by the senses, the eyelids were exactly closed."

Again—

"On the 12th January, your committee met at the house of M. Foissac, when there were present M. ——, a deputy, M. de ——, aide-de-camp of the king, and M. Segalas, member of the Academy. M. Foissac told us that he was going to set Paul Villagrand (a reputed somnambulist) asleep; that in the state of somnambulism, a finger should be applied to each of his closed eyes, and that, in spite of this complete occlusion of the eyelids, he should distinguish the colour of cards, read the title of a work, and words or lines pointed out at random in the body of the work. At the end of two minutes of manipulations, Paul fell asleep. The eyelids being kept closed, constantly and alternately, by MM. Fouquier, Itard, Marc, and the reporter (Husson), there was presented to him a pack of new cards. . . The cards were shuffled, and he recognised easily and successively the king of spades, ace of

clubs, queen of spades, nine of clubs, &c." . . . "While his eyelids were kept closed by M. Segalas, there was presented to him a volume which the reporter had brought with him. He read on the title-page 'Histoire de France.' The book was opened at the 89th page, and he read in the first line 'le nombre de ses,' passed over the word 'troupes,' and continued, 'Au moment où on le croyait occupé des plaisirs du Carnaval.'" . . . "A piece of paper was presented to him, on which were written the words Agglutination and Magnétisme Animal. He spelt the first, and pronounced the two others, &c." . . . . "In all of these experiments, the fingers were applied to the whole of the commissure of both eyes, by pressing down the upper on the under eyelid; and we remarked that the ball of the eye was in a constant rotatory motion, and seemed directed towards the object presented to his vision." . . . "At another sitting, on the 13th March, Paul attempted in

vain to distinguish different cards applied to the pit of his stomach; but he read, with his eyes still closed, in a book opened at random, and at this time it was M. Jules Cloquet who kept his eyes shut."

In the next case some of the higher feats of magnetism were developed in the presence of the commissioners. M. Foissac was the physician who was in attendance upon the patient, Pierre Cazot.

"Pierre Cazot, aged 20 years, a hatter by trade, was born of an epileptic mother, and had been subject to epileptic fits, which usually occurred five or six times a-week. He was admitted to the *Hôpital de la Charité*, in the beginning of August, 1827. He was immediately subjected to the processes of magnetising, and sleep was produced at the third sitting. At the tenth sitting, on the 19th August, at nine o'clock in the morning, he exhibited the usual appearances of magnetic somnambulism in the presence of the members of

the committee. He then declared, that at four in the afternoon of the same day he would have an attack of epilepsy, but that it might be prevented by previously magnetising him. The committee preferred to await the fulfilment of his prediction. The fit took place precisely at the time foretold by the patient."

"On the 24th August, being magnetised and thrown into somnambulism, M. Fouquier thrust a pin an inch long into his fore-arm,—another, the sixth of an inch long, under the breast-bone *(sternum)*,—a third into the pit of the stomach,—and a fourth into the sole of the foot. M. Guersent, a member of the committee, pinched him in the fore-arm so severely as to produce a livid spot. M. Itard, another member, leaned on his thigh with the whole weight of his body,—all without any manifestation of sensibility or consciousness on the part of the patient; nevertheless, he heard, understood, and answered questions put to him by the

committee, and the following dialogue took place :—

Q. How long will your fits continue?

A. For a year.

Q. Do you know whether they will follow close on one another?

A. No.

Q. Will you have any this month?

A. I shall have one on the 27th, at twenty minutes past three o'clock.

Q. Will it be severe?

A. Not half so bad as the last one.

Q. On what day will you have another?

A. *(After showing signs of impatience)* On the 7th September.

Q. At what hour?

A. At ten minutes before six in the forenoon.

" On the day on which this conversation took place, Cazot was obliged to leave the hospital in consequence of the indisposition of one of his children. An accident prevented his return to the hospital on the 27th, the day predicted for

his next fit, and his medical attendant having thrown him into a magnetic sleep just before the predicted hour, the fit did not take place."

"It was determined now to place the magnetiser, without informing the patient, in an adjacent room, and to try the effect of the customary operations through the wall, or partition. Accordingly, on the 10th September, Cazot was invited to the house of M. Itard, at seven o'clock in the evening, it having been arranged that M. Foissac should not come till a later hour. M. Itard and the other members of the committee entered into conversation with Cazot, and thus engaged him during the evening. At half-past eleven o'clock, M. Foissac arrived, and being conducted to an ante-chamber, separated from the room occupied by Cazot and the committee by two doors, both of which were closed, proceeded in the usual manner. Three minutes had not elapsed when Cazot said, 'I believe M. Foissac is there, for I

feel myself stupefied.' At the end of eight minutes he was put into the state of somnambulism, and foretold that, on the 1st October next following (in three weeks from that day), he should have a fit at two minutes before noon.

"This fit took place exactly at the moment predicted, and was witnessed by the members of the commission. It was more than usually violent and severe, accompanied by tetanic rigidity of the trunk and limbs, convulsive contortions of the eyes, decided *opisthotonos*, stifled and tremulous respiration, and pulse from 132 to 160."

"M. Foissac, as Cazot's medical attendant, was accustomed to put him in a state of somnambulism occasionally, to relieve him from head-aches, to which he was subject. Some days after this meeting, conversing with the patient in that state, he questioned him about the time of his next fit, to verify the result of the conversation with the commissioners; and Cazot

informed him, that the day would be the 3rd and not the 4th November. M. Foissac, conceiving that an error had crept into the procès-verbal, immediately informed M. Itard of this.

"The committee subsequently witnessed the two predicted fits: the first took place at *six* minutes past four, instead of five minutes, as predicted;—and *it was remarkable that the fit commenced when Cazot was in a profound sleep, in which he had been for two days before.* The fit predicted for the 9th December took place at a quarter before ten, instead of half-past nine, and was, like the former, preceded by a deep sleep, in which it commenced.

"On the 11th February, 1828, Cazot predicted a fit for the 22d April, at five minutes past twelve o'clock, which was afterwards witnessed by the committee. It commenced at *ten* minutes past twelve, and was remarkable for its violence. In his fury, Cazot bit his hand and fore-arm.

After it had continued thirty-five minutes, M. Foissac magnetised him. The convulsions soon subsided, and were succeeded by somnambulism. In this state he predicted two fits; the first for the 25th June. In two days after, on the 24th April, he was thrown down by a restive horse, which he tried to stop, and was so severely injured, that he died of the contusions on the 15th May." Of this consummation his prescience did not inform him.

We cannot omit the following case:—

"Mademoiselle Celine Sauvage was a patient susceptible of somnambulism by the magnetic process, and was put into that state at various times, in the presence of the committee, in the months of April, June, August, and December, 1826, and January and February, 1827.

"In this state, her sensibility was almost entirely annihilated, for she made several inspirations, having a bottle filled with hydrochloric acid under her nostrils, without manifesting any emotion. M.

Marc pinched her wrist; a needle, used in acupuncture, was thrust a quarter of an inch into her thigh; and another, of the same depth into her wrist. These needles, being united by means of a galvanic conductor, perceptible convulsive motions were produced in the hand; but the patient was quite unconscious of all that was done. She heard the voices of persons who spoke close to her, and touched her, but she did not remark the noise of earthenware broken by falling beside her.

"The power of this patient to distinguish the internal diseases of persons placed in magnetic connexion with her was tried, in the presence of the committee, in three different cases: first, with M. Marc, a member of the committee; second, with a young lady, a patient of M. Husson, a member of the committee; third, with another patient of M. Husson, a young married woman, Madame La C———.

"In the case of M. Marc, the patient having applied her hand to his forehead

and to the region of the heart, declared that the blood had a tendency to the head; that, at that moment, he had a pain on the left side of the head; that he suffered oppression after having eaten; that he was subject to cough; that the lower part of the breast was gorged with blood; and that something impeded the alimentary passage. She prescribed bleeding, hemlock poultices; that the breast should be rubbed with laudanum; that he should eat little and often; and that he should abstain from exercise immediately after a meal.

"M. Marc confirmed these declarations, *so far* as admitting the oppression after meals, the cough, and the pain on the left side of the head, at the time of the experiments.

"In another case, of Madame La C———, the whole right side of the neck was deeply obstructed by a great congeries of glands close upon each other. The committee proceeding in this case in the

same manner as in the former, the somnambulist declared that the stomach was attacked by a substance like poison; that there was a slight inflammation of the intestines; that in the upper part of the neck, on the right side, there was a scrofulous complaint, and prescribed a mode of treatment, which being followed for some time, a perceptible amelioration of the symptoms took place. But the patient, not thinking her recovery proceeding with sufficient rapidity, induced the family to call another consultation of physicians who ordered her to be again placed under mercurial treatment. She became worse, and expired after two months of acute suffering. The body was examined, and a *procès verbal* of the result was signed by MM. Fouquier, Marjolin, Cruveiller, and Foissac: it verified the existence of a scrofulous obstruction in the neck, and the diseases of the stomach.

"The committee thus sum up the result of their observations with the somnam-

bulist :—First, that, in the state of somnambulism, she discovered certain diseases affecting three persons placed in magnetic connexion with her. Secondly, that by the declaration of the first, the examination of the second by puncture, and the *post mortem* examination of the third, the annunciations of the somnambulist were confirmed. Thirdly, that the modes of treatment she prescribed were within the limits of those remedies with which she might have been acquainted, and the order of the things which she might reasonably recommend; and, fourthly, that she applied them with discernment."

The case attested by Jules Cloquet, which has been referred to, and which, in violation of one of the resolutions of the commissioners, was admitted as evidence in the inquiry, is as follows :—

"Madame Plantin, residing in the Rue St. Denis, Paris, had suffered for several years from a cancer in the right breast, which was combined with a considerable

swelling of the corresponding axillary ganglions. M. Chapelain, the physician in attendance on this lady, had for several months recourse to animal magnetism, with a view of reducing the swelling of the breast, but had succeeded in obtaining no other result than a profound sleep, during which all sensibility of the patient appeared to be annihilated; but her ideas retained their clearness. M. Chapelain, seeing that no hope of cure remained, except by the extirpation of the tumour, ventured to propose this operation to Madame Plantin, but she recoiled from the idea with horror.

"Under these circumstances, the physician applied to M. Cloquet, the eminent surgeon and anatomist, and proposed to him to perform the operation on the patient while she was in a state of magnetic somnambulism, provided her consent was procured while in the same state. To this proposition, under the circumstances, M. Cloquet acceded; and M. Chapelain,

having thrown Madame Plantin into a state of somnambulism, proposed to her to submit to the operation, and succeeded in obtaining her consent. So little fear did the idea inspire, in this state, that she conversed calmly upon the subject of the operation with M. Chapelain.

"Upon the day appointed for the operation, M. Cloquet, arriving at half-past ten in the morning (Sunday), found the patient dressed and seated in an elbow-chair, in the attitude of a person in a quiet natural sleep. She had returned about an hour before from mass, and since her return M. Chapelain had placed her in a state of magnetic sleep. She conversed with great calmness of the operation she was about to undergo; and every thing having been arranged for it, she undressed herself, and placed herself in a chair.

"M. Chapelain supported the right arm, the left being permitted to hang down at the side of the body. M. Pailloux, pupil of the Hospital of St. Louis, was employed

to present the instruments and to make the ligatures. A first incision, commencing at the arm-pit, was continued beyond the tumour as far as the internal surface of the breast. The second, commencing at the same point, was carried below, and continued till it met the former on the inside. The tumour being thus cut around, the swelled ganglions were dissected with precaution on account of their vicinity to the axillary artery, and the tumour was finally extirpated. The operation lasted from ten to twelve minutes.

"During all this time Madame Plantin continued to converse calmly with M. Cloquet, and did not exhibit the slightest sign of sensibility. No motion of the limbs or of the features was perceived; no change either in the respiration or in the voice, nor any alteration in the pulse, was discernible. The patient continued in the same state of indifference and impassibility in which she was some minutes before the

operation. There was no occasion to hold, but only to support her. A ligature was applied to the lateral thoracic artery, which was open during the extraction of the ganglions. The wound was united by means of adhesive plaster, and dressed. The patient was put to bed while a state of somnambulism, in which she was left for forty-eight hours. An hour after the operation, there appeared a slight hæmorrhage, which, however, was of no consequence. The first dressing was taken off on the following Tuesday, the 14th, and the wound was cleaned and dressed anew. The patient exhibited no sensibility or pain, and the pulse preserved its usual rate.

"After this dressing, M. Chapelain awakened the patient, whose sleep had now continued since an hour previous to the operation, that is to say, for forty-eight hours. The lady did not seem to have any consciousness of what had passed in the interval; but on being in-

formed of the operation, and seeing her children around her, she experienced a very lively emotion, which the magnetiser checked by immediately setting her asleep.

"Madame Plantin had a married daughter, Madame Lagandré, who then resided in the country, and had been unable to repair to Paris until some days after the operation had been performed upon her mother. This lady being susceptible of the magnetic influence, was operated upon by M. Chapelain; and being thrown into somnambulism, manifested, in a high degree, the faculty of *clairvoyance*. It was proposed to question her upon the state of her mother, and for this purpose Dr. Chapelain threw her into somnambulism on the 26th; fourteen days after the day of the operation. Being questioned respecting her mother's complaints, she gave a circumstantial and accurate description of them, and predicted her death on the 28th, in

spite of all that could be done for her. On the 27th, M. Chapelain, on visiting his patient, Madame Plantin, found that the prediction of the somnambulist was about to be verified. She was evidently much worse. M. Cloquet requested M. Chapelain to place Madame Lagandré again in a state of somnambulism, which being done, he put several questions to her relative to Madame Plantin. She answered, that her mother had become very weak during the last few days; that her life was only artificially prolonged by magnetism; and that, notwithstanding every effort, she should die early next morning without pain. When asked what were the internal parts diseased, she gave a minute description of them.

"During this day, M. Chapelain magnetised Madame Plantin several times with great energy, but scarcely succeeded in even setting her asleep. When he returned next morning, about seven o'clock, the patient had just expired.

"The two physicians, naturally anxious to ascertain the correctness of the declarations of the somnambulist respecting the internal state of the body, asked and obtained the consent of the family to examine it. M. Moreau, secretary to the surgical section of the Academy, and M. Dronsart, a physician, were requested to attend as witnesses; and it was resolved that the examination should take place next day, in their presence. It was conducted by M. Cloquet and his assistant, M. Pailloux.

"A short time before the hour fixed upon for the examination of the body, M. Chapelain threw Madame Lagandré into somnambulism. The medical gentlemen present then requested to know again from her own mouth what she had previously said she saw in the interior of the body of Madame Plantin. The somnambulist repeated in a firm tone of voice and without hesitation what she had formerly announced to MM. Cloquet and Chape-

lain. The latter then conducted her to a room adjoining that in which the operation was to be performed,—the door between the rooms being exactly closed. Madame Lagandré was still in a state of somnambulism, and, in spite of the barriers which separated her from these gentlemen, she followed the bistoury in the hands of the operator, and said to the persons around her, 'Why do they make the incision in the middle of the breast, seeing that the effusion is in the right side?'

"The examination of the body fully verified all that the somnambulist had stated respecting it. The *procès verbal* of the examination was drawn up by M. Dronsart, and attested and signed by all the persons present."

These last extraordinary accounts are examples of a condition which has not yet been definitely named—a condition to which the term "clairvoyance" has been given, by virtue of which persons can exercise a faculty analogous to sight

without the intervention of the ordinary apparatus of vision, like

> "Rosicrusian Virtuosis,
> Who see with ears, and hear with noses."

This astonishing faculty was noticed by Puysegur, but more definitely by Petetin, of Lyons, who wrote a work entitled "Electricité Animal," in 1808. He states that some cataleptic patients, during a paroxysm which he considered nothing more than natural somnambulism, acquired the power of reading a book or tasting "bon bons" at the epigastrium. One of Petetin's patients distinguished a purse which had been slipped into his pocket by an incredulous person; she also told the number of gold and silver coins in each side of the purse. Works on Mesmerism abound with instances of clairvoyance. Tardy de Montravel relates the case of a man who, through the medium of his epigastrium (whilst his eyes were perfectly closed), recognized and described

objects of sight which were at a distance. Kieser mentions an epileptic lad at Jena, in whom magnetism produced a series of nervous affections, such as convulsions, chorea, tetanus, and ultimately somnambulism and clairvoyance; whilst in this state the eyes were to all appearance perfectly closed; but his toes, fingers, elbows, shoulders, chin, and nose, possessed the faculty of conveying to the mind those qualities of objects which it is the province of the visual organs to ascertain. Wolfart mentions a lady who, in a state of somnambulism, described what her brother and a clergyman with whom he was on a visit at the distance of many miles, were doing at a certain time. On subsequent inquiry, it was ascertained that her statements were substantially correct. These cases will suffice to give the reader an idea of the condition to which allusion has just been made.

Returning to the commissioners, it must be remarked, that whilst their

experiments were proceeding, *absolute silence* was kept; an observance which does not accord with the practices of the great master of Mesmerism, in which "soft music stole upon the ear," and was made an important element in his orgies, from its presumed capacity of conducting the magnetic fluid. This fact shows that already a partial revolution in the system had been effected. The experiments which were made during this important era, in connexion with animal magnetism, were numerous and varied; it was now to stand or fall according to the verdict which the commissioners should pronounce; and foes and friends used all the arts of advocacy in consonance with their peculiar opinions, either to accelerate and ensure its downfall, or to obtain for it a glorious and final triumph. The spirit in which the inquiries of this commission were conducted may be collected from the following observations preliminary to the report, alike honourable to its

members, and calculated to serve the general advancement of truth.

"The committee proceeded to fufil their duties with the most scrupulous exactness; and, while we do justice to those who assisted us, we must, at the same time, destroy even the slightest suspicion which might arise with regard to the share which others may be supposed to have had in the investigation of this question. The committee invariably suggested the methods of experimenting —traced the plan of inquiry—directed the course to be pursued—followed its progress—and described and recorded the particulars. No experiment was made without the presence of the committee, even by members of the Academy. Whatever confidence the spirit of confraternity and mutual esteem may have inspired, we felt that, in a question whose solution is so delicate, we are to trust none but ourselves, and you can rely on our guarantee alone."

After describing the modes of operation which were adopted in these experiments, the report proceeds to state that persons in absolute health do not appear to be susceptible of the magnetic influence, thus corroborating the views respecting the sphere of its influence which had previously been entertained; and goes on to observe, that sometimes the effects produced were feeble and evanescent, and such as might be attributed to hope, fear, ennui, and the effects of the imagination. The most important conclusions to which the commission arrived ~~at are~~ as follows.

"A certain number of the effects observed appeared to depend upon magnetism alone, and were never produced without its operation. These effects were very various; they agitated some, soothed others, produced a momentarily accelerated respiration and circulation, feverish symptoms, convulsive motions resembling electric shocks, numbness, heaviness,

sleepiness, and in a small number of cases the state called by magnetisers somnambulism. . . . .

"We may conclude with certainty that the state of real magnetic somnambulism exists, when it gives rise to the development of new faculties, which have been designated by the names of *clairvoyance, intuition,* and *prevision;* also when it produces great changes in the physical economy, such as insensibility, sudden and considerable increase of strength; examples of all which were witnessed by the committee. . . . .

"We hold it as demonstrated that sleep has been produced by magnetism in circumstances in which the patients could not see, and were ignorant of the means employed to occasion it. . . . .

"The patient can not only be acted upon, but be thrown into a complete state of somnambulism, and recovered from it without his knowledge, by an

operation out of his sight, at a certain distance, and with doors intervening.

"In general, changes more or less remarkable are produced upon the perception and other mental faculties of those individuals who are in a state of magnetic somnambulism.

"Some, amidst the noise of a confused conversation, hear only the voice of the operator; some will answer questions addressed to them by persons placed in magnetic connexion with them; others carry on a conversation indifferently with every one around them.

"The eyes are usually closed; the eyelids yield with difficulty to the efforts which are made to open them; the ball is found convulsed, and carried upwards, and sometimes towards the lower part of the orbit.

"Sometimes the power of smelling appears to be annihilated. The patient will inhale muriatic acid or ammonia without inconvenience; nay, without per-

ceiving them. The contrary, however, takes place in certain cases.

"The greater number of somnambulists we have seen were completely insensible. We might tickle their feet, their nostrils, or the angle of the eyes with a feather; we might pinch their skin, so as to leave a mark, prick them with pins under the nails without producing pain, and without their even perceiving it. Finally, we saw one who was insensible to the most painful operation in surgery, during which she did not manifest the slightest emotion by her countenance, pulse, or respiration.

"While in the state of somnambulism, the patients retained the faculties which they possessed when awake. The memory appeared to be more faithful and more extensive; they remembered every thing that passed at the time, and at every previous time in which they were placed in the state of somnambulism.

"Upon awaking, they seemed totally

unconscious of all that took place during their somnambulism.

"We have seen two somnambulists, who, with their eyes closed, perceived the objects placed before them; they distinguished the colour and the value of cards without touching them; they read words traced with the hand, as also some lines of books opened at random. This took place when the eyelids were kept closed by the fingers of a member of the committee.

"In two somnambulists we found the faculty of foreseeing the acts of organism more or less remote. One of them predicted, several months before, the day, hour, and minute of epileptic fits. The other announced the period of his cure. Their previsions were realised with remarkable exactness.

"We found one somnambulist who declared the symptoms of the diseases of three persons placed in magnetic connexion with her.

"Considered as a cause of certain physiological phenomena, or as a therapeutic remedy, magnetism ought to be allowed a place within the circle of medical sciences; and, consequently, physicians only should practise it or superintend its use, as is the case in northern countries."

In enumerating the facts, the following classification was finally adopted.

"1. Magnetism has no effect upon persons in a sound state of health, nor upon some diseased persons.

"2. In others its effects are slight.

"3. These effects are sometimes produced by ennui, by monotony, and by the imagination.

"4. We have seen them developed independently of these last causes, most probably as the effect of magnetism alone."

To this favourable and impartial report the signatures of the commissioners were appended, with the exception of those of

M. Double and Majendie, who pleaded that they had not assisted in making the experiments.

The reading of the report in public, by Husson, appears to have been looked forward to with no ordinary degree of anxiety; and the arrival of the appointed time was hailed by a state of excitement almost unparalleled in the history of modern science. The following description of that event, from the "Isis," will be read with interest.

"The hall, in which the Academy assemble—so empty on ordinary occasions—was crowded upon that day, and even the passages were obstructed by the curious. It might have been supposed that one of those decrees on which the weal or woe of the nation depend, was in agitation; and all the members of the Academy, even those enfeebled by their age, were at their posts. The meeting was then opened, and M. Husson, the reporter of the committee, appeared at

the bar, with a voluminous roll of papers in his hand, and delivered, in a grave and measured tone, the report. During the commencement, the members of the Academy listened with uneasiness to the detail of the facts; but, when the reporter arrived at the point of his narrative in which he detailed the magnetic phenomena of somnambulism, lucidity, and prevision, a murmur arose among the assembly, which gradually increased until several of the learned physicians jumped from their seats, and apostrophised in terms of unmeasured indignation and contumely the distinguished members of their own committee, who related conscientiously the facts which they had seen and publicly attested.

"An outcry was raised on all sides against the members of the committee, whose cause, however, was immediately espoused by the few partizans of animal magnetism then present, who retorted by such exclamations and charges as the

following: 'You do not believe in the facts of magnetism? be it so: but in this very place the circulation of the blood was denied; yet the blood does circulate. In this place, they who first practised inoculation were denounced as impostors, and the patients as dupes and idiots; yet was the inoculation no imposture, nor were its subjects in a state of idiotcy. In this place, the physicians who first prescribed tartar-emetic were put on their trial and expelled the Academy; yet you yourselves now employ it in enormous doses. This is the institution which ridiculed those who affirmed that stones fall from the sky; yet meteoric stones do fall.' Thus, the sanctuary of science was rendered a scene of Babel-like confusion."

Before we again quit the continent, it becomes us at least to notice the far-famed "prophetess of Prevorst," a woman named "Hauffe," since her physician, Justinus Kerner, a shrewd man, has

taken the trouble to furnish her remarkable history with her "last dying speech," in two volumes, each consisting of more than 300 pages.

The hallucinations of this frenzied or knavish woman were singularly exempt from suspicion; and not only so, but they so inthralled the Magi of her day (some of whom are still living, and hold professorships in German universities), that Kerner gravely declared his conviction that "she was a flower of light, living on sunbeams;"* and after relating one of the miraculous performances of the prophetess, Kerner exclaims, "Recognize here, O thoughtful reader, the power of spiritual sympathy, prayer, and child-like faith!" To which another professor, Eschenmeyer, as devoutly responds —"Ah! my friend, they" (the unbelievers in this farce) "will recognize it not; they have not even a remote idea

* Die Scherin von Prevorst, p. 59.

of what spiritual sympathy is; they cannot feel what prayer or child-like faith consists in."* To her sympathetically frantic friend and physician, Kerner, some one asserted that she was cracked; to which he replied, that she was "as much cracked as Plato was;" and, indeed, all her biographers and commentators were deeply impressed with the belief that all her utterances were irrefragable and awful truths. A few selections from Kerner's accounts of her will give the reader an opportunity of forming his own estimate of her character and pretensions.

"Long before she was brought to me," says Kerner, "the whole earth, with its atmosphere, and all that was in and on it, mankind not excluded, existed for her no longer. She required more than one magnetiser,—more than the love, the zeal, the judgment which any one man

* Die Scherin von Prevorst, vol. i. p. 179.

possesses; she required what no mortal can bestow, another heaven, another air, and other nourishment than this world affords. She belonged to a world of spirits; she was half spirit herself; she belonged to the region beyond death, in which she really half existed."

Eschenmeyer said of her, "Without apparent derangement of the vital functions, her life seemed to be only the glimmer of an expiring light. Her spirit seemed to be often separated from her soul, and the former frequently to dwell in other regions, whilst the latter was still bound to the body." The peculiarities of sensation which she evinced are passing strange, and so multitudinous, that it would be an almost endless task to relate them: For instance: "The spirit of all things, of which we in our ordinary condition have no perception, was perceptible to and operated upon her; more particularly the spirits of metals, herbs, men, and animals. All

imponderable matters, even the different colours of the rays of light, produced upon her particular effects. To her the electrical fluid was visible and palpable, &c., &c. Her guests were frequently visitors from the unseen world, who made revelations to her respecting the "whereabouts," &c., &c., of the land of spirits; and amongst them were sometimes the unhappy ghosts of murderers, who sought of her instruction and aid in order to obtain release from the thraldom that their crimes had imposed upon them. One ghost in particular was an irresistible importunate, until at length she consented to a conversation. He confessed to having murdered his brother, and that he was a member of the Weiler family, of Lichtenberg. She directed him to the word of God, reminded him that there is but one Saviour, taught him to pray, and prayed for hours with him kneeling by her side. On the seventh night, the apparition told her that the hour of his

liberation was near, and thanked her for having brought him to the Saviour. On a sudden seven of his children joined the party, all white, shining, and joyful; they formed a circle round him, and sang in exquisite melody. The prophetess afterwards sank into a sleep, in which *she* continued to sing for some time; when she awoke, she found the knight (for such he had been) still by her side; he wished to mark her hand in remembrance of him, and refused to quit her until obliged to do so by the timely arrival and interference of the ghost of her grandmother. With regard to these spiritual visitors generally, she said,

"They look like thin clouds; but are not transparent, though they at first seem so; still I never saw one which cast a shadow. Their form is like that which they had during life, only colourless and grey; their clothing is also similar to that which they wore when alive, but it is also colourless, as if made of cloud.

The brighter and better spirits, however, have on a long garment, hanging in folds, with a girdle round the waist. The expression of their features is generally solemn and sad. Their eyes are bright, like fire. None of them, that I ever saw, had hair on the head. They make noises, particularly to excite the attention of those who have not the gift of seeing them: these noises consist of sounds in the air, sometimes sudden and sharp, and producing a shock; sometimes musical; at others resembling the rustling of paper, the falling of sand, the rolling of a ball, &c. They can carry heavy substances, overturn tables, knock plates together in the rack, &c. The better spirits are brighter than the bad ones, and their voice is not so strong. Many, particularly the darker ones, when I uttered words of religious consolation, sucked them, as it were, in, and I saw them become brighter and lighter in consequence; but I was rendered weaker.

Most of the spirits who come to me are in the lowest regions of the spiritual world, which are situated in our atmosphere: they were the grovelling ones of this world, or such as did not die in the Christian faith, or else such as in expiring clung to some earthly thought, which now weighs them down. In these inferior regions the spirits are still exposed to the temptations of the devil. I once asked a spirit whether children grew after death. The answer was 'Yes; the soul gradually expands its vest, until it is as large as it would have become on earth.' I cannot effect the salvation of these spirits; I am only their mediator; I pray ardently with them, and so lead them by degrees to the great Saviour of the world; but it costs an infinity of trouble before such a soul turns again to the Lord."

The first of the volumes of Kerner is occupied with an account of the magnetic condition of this extraordinary somnam-

bulist; the other, with a particular detail of her ghostly experience. She died on the 5th of August, 1829, and lies buried at Lowenstein, in the kingdom of Wurtemberg, where to this day faithful ghosts flock, at shadowy eventide, to pay their unsubstantial tributes to their once sublunary friend. Had not the ecstasies of this lunatic been by her biographer attributed to magnetic influences rather than to the real cause, chronic frenzy, we should not here have entertained them, but from their similitude should have classed them at once with other equally eccentric imaginings which unhappily find utterance in our lunatic asylums. That such men as Schubert, and Gorres, and Kerner, who have gained extensive reputation by their advancement of science, should have had their faculties prostrated by such an unequivocal case of mental aberration, is truly wonderful; but at the same time affords a melancholy picture of human

wisdom, even at the best. The one step "from the sublime to the ridiculous" was here, as in similar instances, taken; and in regions of absurdities, if allowed once to enter, even the well trained and philosophic mind not unfrequently becomes bewildered,—seeks in vain for the vantage ground of truth, on which to maintain its stedfastness; and, like a voyager without an anchor to stay, or compass to guide him, becomes at once the sport and victim of every ungovernable impulse.

The subject in 1827 was considered of sufficient importance to demand for it an article in the "Dictionnaire de Médecine," which was then publishing; and M. Rostan, an accomplished scholar and eminent physician, was requested to supply it. This gentleman had for some time been a convert to Mesmerism, and for his own satisfaction had put its pretensions to the test by performing numerous experiments. The following

extract from that article will show that Rostan gave credence to the doctrine of transference of the senses; and unless collusion were employed, the case which it contains would go far to establish the fact of its possibility in the minds of any but determined unbelievers.

"The following is an experiment which I have frequently repeated; it was made in the presence of M. Furrus. I took my watch, and placed it three or four inches behind the occiput. I asked the somnambulist if she saw any thing? 'Certainly, I see something shining; it gives me pain.' Her countenance expressed uneasiness; ours must have expressed astonishment: we looked at each other, and M. Furrus breaking silence, said to me, that since she saw something shining, she would no doubt tell what it was.

"'What is it that you see shining?' 'Ah! I do not know, I cannot tell you.' 'Look well.' 'Stay, it fatigues me—

stay, it is a watch.' Fresh matter of surprise. 'But since she sees that it is a watch,' said M. Furrus, 'she will doubtless be able to tell what o'clock it is?' 'Oh no, that is too difficult.' 'Pay attention, endeavour.' 'Stay, I am going to try. I may, perhaps, be able to tell the hour; but I shall never be able to see the minutes.' And after having tried with the greatest attention, said, 'It wants ten minutes to eight,' which was correct. M. Furrus was desirous to repeat the experiment himself and did so with the same success. He made me turn the hands of his watch several times; we presented it to her without having looked at it. She made no mistake."

In England, during the time that these proceedings were taking place on the continent, there was much less of enthusiasm on the subject; and, indeed, it appears to have been chiefly through the fostering care of its step-parents, the Lauterbourgs, and Miss Preston, another

eminent magnetiser, not long deceased, that its existence in this country was even maintained. The year 1829 was more propitious; the late M. Chevenix, a man of vigorous mind and considerable talents, who had convinced himself of the truth of Mesmerism by numerous trials of its influence made by himself at Paris, introduced the subject to Dr. Elliotson at St. Thomas's Hospital; and offered to convince the doctor of the fact of magnetic influence, by Mesmerising any person who might be presented to him. "I selected," says Dr. E., "female patients at random from my list of their names, and neither had he" (M. Chevenix) "seen them, nor had they heard of him or Mesmerism. Each was manipulated alone in a private room. On manipulating a patient of a colleague who selected her himself, she had an hysterical fit, at which I was not surprised, as hysteria was her complaint, and the least emotion at any time excited a paroxysm."

. . . . "He manipulated six other young females with no effect, except that one labouring under chorea said her head was heavy and light alternately. . . . I remained unconvinced until another female was Mesmerised. She was an ignorant Irish girl, and unprepared to expect any thing. In a minute she plaintively entreated M. Chevenix not to proceed. The manipulations drew weakness into her, and made her feel faint. She next complained of pain in the abdomen; on a few transverse movements she said the pain was gone; the same thing occurred several times, and once pain was complained of in the chest, but ceased presently after a few transverse movements. He darted an open hand towards one of her arms, and told her to raise it; she could scarcely move it: after a few transverse movements, she declared the stiffness and uneasiness were gone, and she moved it as well as the other. . . . Her eyes were closed as

perfectly as could be, and a piece of paper, weighing perhaps a grain, being placed upon one foot, she instantly was unable to raise it; the paper was removed, and she raised it directly. All these things were repeated again and again, I telling M. Chevenix in French what part I wished to be rendered powerless and what to be restored, and she being prevented as much as possible from seeing. . . .

"From this time I was satisfied that such a power as Mesmerism exists, and hoped some day to inquire into it."* The doctor did not, however, prosecute any further inquiries of moment until the arrival of Baron Dupotet de Sennevoy in London about the year 1837; which circumstance gave an impulse to the doctor's conviction, and roused that indefatigable and praiseworthy zeal, which led him, in defiance of all opposition, boldly to com-

* Elliotson's Phys., p. 680.

mence, and firmly to pursue, a course of experiments which will in all probability much assist in determining (at least for the present) the unsettled state of public opinion with respect to this subject.

The University College Hospital was the theatre chosen for his experiments; which were, with a liberality truly consistent with purity of motive and honesty of purpose, open alike to friends and foes. Patients suffering under epilepsy were, from their being more easily affected by Mesmerism than others, selected at first for experiment. Many were lulled into a state but little differing from ordinary sleep; but at length one was met with who under Baron Dupotet's manipulation gave indications of a higher state of somnambulism. "At length," says Dr. E., "she made one deep inspiration, and was then in a comatose sleep. . . . From this moment we could do what we pleased without waking her,—halloo in her ears, dash her arms in every

direction, pull her hair out, pinch her hand, put snuff up her nose: she was perfectly insensible, breathing placidly, and sleeping on in spite of any attempt to wake her, till the baron made two or three transverse movements, when she invariably awoke. . . . She was Mesmerised many times before she answered questions: . . . at length she began to speak to every question; and on one occasion, being teased again and again to give an answer when she repeatedly declared she could not, she fell into a violent rage, rose, seized the inquirer, shook and pushed him with both hands, and on being forced into a chair, after resting quiet for a few minutes, she rose and made at the same person again very fiercely, and sat down at last with difficulty, pale with rage, and her hands quite cold. . . . She proved herself to be in complete ignorance of all that had passed."* Subsequently another epilep-

* Elliotson's Phys., p. 684.

tic inmate was discovered peculiarly susceptible; and who by the feats and failings which she exhibited whilst professedly in a Mesmeric state, has so thoroughly connected her name with the history of animal magnetism, that any account would be miserably defective in which it did not transpire. The case is as follows.

"Elizabeth O'Key, age sixteen, a housemaid, was admitted to the hospital on the 4th April, 1837. She had suffered epilepsy for twelve months previously; the fits occurring once or twice a week, and frequently several times on the same day. She also suffered headaches, which were generally worse in the morning and evening. For the first two months she was treated with small doses of mineral medicines, without much effect. In the month of June following, such remedies having failed, the Baron Dupotet, with Dr. Elliotson's permission, commenced the

process of Mesmerising or magnetising her. After several sittings sleep was produced, and her epileptic fits became less frequent. The operation of magnetising has been constantly, almost daily, practised on her from that time to the present.

"The phenomena of sleep or coma, sleep-waking, somnambulism, and ecstatic delirium, attended with external insensibility, have been all successively developed. Her epileptic fits ceased altogether in last October; since which time she has no bodily illness, save headache, which has constantly afflicted her, though in a less degree than formerly.

" When by any of the usual manipulations she is magnetised, her countenance changes its expression,—her eyes become fixed—the optic axes inclining slightly to the nose, one rather more than the other; the eyelids droop, but do not quite close. By further manipulations she falls into magnetic sleep, in which she remains for a short time. She awakens spontaneously,

always with a slight exclamation indicative of agreeable surprise; her eyes open, and her whole countenance is changed, assuming an expression of singular activity and liveliness. She becomes forward and loquacious, humorous, witty, and sarcastic; she utters sallies of irony, and mimics various persons with irresistible humour; she criticises the costume and appearance of those around her, expressing pleasure at neatness of appearance and brilliancy of colours. She also recoils with fear from countenances having an appearance or expression (as those of foreigners) with which she has not been familiar; all her natural timidity is apparently removed, and her phraseology totally changed: she often repeats, accompanied by sallies of laughter, the vulgar cant which she has heard among the lower classes of people: she sings, with great sweetness of voice and correctness of tune, airs which she has learned—mixing in a ludicrous manner the serious

with the comic, the religious with the profane. She will, for example, commence the 100th Psalm or the hymns of the church service, and then suddenly commence *Jim Crow*. In the same manner she will recite Scripture alternately with the slang she has learned from the lower orders. She will proceed in this way before an assembly of several hundred persons, quite unconscious of any cause for restraint or reserve: her moral qualities, however, remain unimpaired; and, indeed, (being stript of the reserve imposed by her timidity of character, when in her senses,) are rendered still more striking. To the persons with whom she is in daily intercourse, such as her medical attendants and the hospital nurses, she now evinces the most unreserved feelings of affection,—often embracing them, pressing their hands, and showing the most touching tenderness towards them.

"When in this state her body is deprived of all external sensibility. Her hair may

be pulled, her flesh pinched or bruised, the point of a pin or needle may puncture her, without any consciousness of pain being evinced. On one occasion it was thought advisable to insert a seton in the back of her neck, with a view to the relief of her headaches; this was done while delirious without any indication of consciousness on her part, by one person behind her back while another was talking to her in front. After she was awakened and restored to her natural state, she immediately felt the wound, and was greatly astonished on being informed of what had been done.

"In this state some of the most remarkable phenomena are developed in this patient.

"If a person present the points of his fingers near one of her limbs,—say her hand,—and draw them gradually away, and perform this operation repeatedly, the hand of the patient will slowly move in the direction of the motion of the hand of

the operator; and this motion will continue until the hand and arm of the patient follow that of the operator, as far as the mechanism of the patient's limb will permit. The same effect will be produced, if the hand of the operator be directed to the leg or foot of the patient.

" Again, if the operator bring his fingers in contact opposite the mouth of the patient, and slowly separate them, by moving one hand upwards and the other downwards, the jaws of the patient will receive a corresponding motion,—the mouth opening by reason of the upper jaw following the ascending, and the lower the descending hand of the operator.

" If the hands of the operator, instead of being separated by a motion upwards and downwards, be separated by a horizontal motion to the right and to the left, the lips of the patient suffer a corresponding motion.

" In the same manner, if the hands be opposite the closed eyes of the patient, and be separated, by raising one and

lowering the other, the eyelids will suffer a corresponding motion, the upper eyelids ascending and the lower descending, leaving the eyeballs uncovered, and giving to the countenance a wild and terrible stare. After the mouth and eyes have been thus caused to open, the whole countenance of this sweet and timid girl assumes the most ghastly and insane expression.

"To remove still more effectually the possibility of collusion between the patient and the operator (were so monstrous a supposition admissible, the rank and respectability of the medical men engaged, and the simplicity and artlessness of the poor little patient, being considered), after having interposed the screens, several visitors directed what motions the operator should make,—the operator himself not knowing previously what those directions would be; and, in such cases, the same effects ensued. On one occasion, the patient being placed in a chair, at

some distance from a pair of folding doors which separated the apartment from an adjacent one, the operator was placed in the other apartment; the doors being closed, it was suggested by Dr. Lardner what motions should be made. The patient was affected in the usual way through the doors,—the motions of her limbs corresponding with those which the operator had been instructed to make.

"Having ascertained that the magnetic or Mesmeric influence is transmitted through every material substance on which experiments have been made, it occurred to Dr. Lardner to institute an inquiry as to its capability of reflection, and to determine whether the physical laws of that reflection bore any analogy to those which are known to prevail in the cases of the reflection of light, sound, and heat.

"In order to submit this question to a conclusive test, Dr. Lardner proceeded in the following manner: A mirror was

placed, at a distance of several feet from the patient, having its plane at an angle of about forty-five degrees with a line drawn from the person of the patient to the mirror. Another mirror was placed at a distance of from twelve to fifteen feet from the first, receiving on its plane the rays from the first, also at an angle of forty-five degrees. Dr. Elliotson presented himself to this second mirror in the direction of the ray reflected from it. By this arrangement, the operator was placed in an apartment at a considerable distance from the patient. The two reflections would thus carry the ray of the magnetic influence (if it were subject to the same laws as those which govern light) from the patient to the operator, or *vice versa*. Things being thus arranged, Dr. Elliotson made towards the second mirror the motions of the hand which, when made towards the person of the patient, usually throw her into a state of coma; after eight or ten motions thus made, the pa-

tient dropped off in a magnetic sleep. This operation was repeated sufficiently often to render it certain that the sleep was not casual, but that it was connected with the movements of the operator by the relation of cause and effect.

"Mr. Herbert Mayo, who was present at some of these experiments by multiplied reflection, proposed to try the effect of the influence reflected from metallic surfaces: it was accordingly tried by him, assisted by Dr. Lardner and Mr. Wood, with surfaces of tin, zinc, and copper. It was found that the two latter surfaces, being unpolished, failed to reflect it; but the surface of tin did so, although with an intensity very inferior to that of a mirror."

The case, as just related in the most sober mood that can be applied to it, created much sensation, not only on account of the more orthodox details which have been enumerated, but of the ludicrous displays of Mesmeric genius which were mixed up with it, and which gave to

the whole the very suspicious appearance of being a farce excellently performed.

Mr. Wakley (the talented editor of the Lancet) was induced to visit these exhibitions, and published the following very rare piece of comedy, which was enacted in his presence.

"Elizabeth O'Key was put to sleep with a single pass. Jane, on seeing her, laughed; and, hugging her, said, 'Oh! you silly thing, you shouldn't live that way.' Dr. Elliotson remarked, as every one was struck with her peculiar manners, 'that she was one of the best hearted girls in the world.' Some gentleman sat on the ground to rest, 'Oh! don't sit that way,' she said, 'Your name isn't Norval, if you sit in that poor place.' Dr. Elliotson, 'Look up there,' (at the crowd.) O'Key, 'Oh! what a many white ones. Why, where the d—l did you all come from?' *(Great Laughter.)* As she spoke, a slight pass of the hand from some visitor behind her stupified

her; and, as she stood, Mr. Wood also behind her, to the right, drew his hand, pointed towards her side, at a yard distance, gradually away from her. The process turned her round from a front position to an oblique one. He continued the motion with his hand, and the girl fell asleep, and dropped to the floor. She was awoke by blowing on her eyes, and on recovering her legs began to skip and sing,—

> 'I went into a tailor's shop,
> To buy a suit of clothes,
> But where the money came from,
> G—— A—— knows.'

Immense laughter followed this distich, and from that she proceeded to sing—

> 'Malbrook she went to be shaved
> And the barber he cut her white chin,'

when her *volatility* being too great for any other experiments, Dr. Elliotson said 'he must stupify her,' which a single pass of one finger, before her face, effected in

a moment; the girl passing from the state of excessive merriment to that of cataleptic rigidity."

On one occasion (Mr. Wakley and others being present) Dr. Elliotson asserted that magnetised nickel produced the most extraordinary phenomena, whilst lead produced no results whatever. Mr. Wakley undertook to test the comparative virtue of these metals. Having placed a piece of thick pasteboard before her eyes, so as entirely to prevent her seeing what was going on, he commenced applying the metals to the girl's hands. First the lead was applied to each hand alternately without any effect whatever. The nickel was next used, and after a short lapse of time the face of the patient became violently flushed; her eyes were convulsed into a startling squint, she fell back in the chair, her breathing was hurried, her limbs rigid, and her back and abdomen appeared to be bent back, as if by a most violent spasm. In this state she remained

for the space of a quarter of an hour. Mr. Wakley was yet doubtful that these symptoms had arisen from the contact of the nickel with O'Key's body, and in order to satisfy himself that such was or was not the case, tried the following expedient, which we copy from the Lancet.

"Mr. Wakley became again the operator, and before the experiment was tried, he stated, privately, to Mr. Clarke, that instead of using nickel only, he would not on this occasion employ any nickel, and desired Mr. Clarke to take notice of the fact, that he would put aside the nickel, unperceived by any other person, the moment that it should be handed to him by Dr. Elliotson, and before either of his (Mr. W.'s) hands should be allowed to come in contact with those of the patient. The experiment was then again performed. Mr. Wakley had taken the nickel from Dr. Elliotson, and put it on one side, when it was taken, unseen by any other person, by Mr. Clarke, who placed it in his

waistcoat pocket, and walked with it to the window, there remaining during the performance of the experiment. Mr. Wakley employed both hands, but his fingers were so held that it was impossible for any person excepting the operator to know what he was holding. Presently, on applying the substance which he held in his left hand to the right hand of the patient, the pasteboard being again held before the eyes of the girl, Mr. Herring, who was standing near, said, with much sincerity of feeling, in a whisper, but loud enough to be heard at a short distance, 'Take care; don't apply the nickel too strongly.' Scarcely had these words escaped from his lips, when the face of the girl again became violently red; her eyes were fixed with an intense squint; she fell back in the chair; a more evident distortion of the body ensued than in the previous paroxysm; the contractions of the voluntary muscles were more strongly marked, producing a striking

rigidity of the frame and limbs, and the shoulders were thrown back to the utmost, the spine displaying as complete a bow as in an attack of opisthotonos: in a word, the severity of all the symptoms appeared to have undergone marked increase. Dr. Elliotson again observed, that 'no metal other than *nickel* had ever produced these effects; that they were most extraordinary;' in fact, that 'they presented a beautiful series of phenomena.' This paroxysm lasted during upwards of half an hour, and was admitted by all who were present to be much more violent than the one which had preceded it.

"Mr. Wakley now suggested that the girl should retire into an adjoining room, where her sister was waiting, as he was anxious to make a statement to Dr. Elliotson in her absence. The girl objected to depart, and therefore her sister was called from the adjoining room, and the gentlemen retired into that room. Mr. Wakley then said to Dr. Elliotson,

'that he felt it to be his duty to state, that the Doctor was entirely deceived respecting the character of the experiments and the cause of the symptoms. That all present had been witnesses of the violent effects which appeared to result from the application of the nickel to the hand, and had heard Dr. Elliotson state that such extraordinary symptoms could be produced by no other magnetised metal, whereas he had not used nickel on that occasion; he had not even *approached* her with it; but that on the instant that it was handed to him by Dr. Elliotson he had put it aside, unobserved, and had merely rubbed upon the skin of the girl a piece of lead and a farthing, which he had respectively held in either hand, but that the metals were so held that he was certain that no person could discover what he was applying.'

"Dr. Elliotson replied, that 'he saw the nickel used; that Mr. W. must have touched her with that metal without

knowing it himself; that he was certain of the fact, and that he was positive that the effect could be produced in no other way.'

"Mr. Wakley then said that there was a gentleman present who could confirm the accuracy of his statement—a witness, in fact, who had the nickel at that moment in his pocket, and had stood with it at the window during the whole of the time that he was applying the lead and the farthing to the hands of the girl.

"Dr. Elliotson again declared that this was impossible, when Mr. Clarke produced from his pocket the piece of nickel, and said that it had really been there during the whole of the experiment, and that it had not been near the girl during the entire trial.

"After a somewhat lengthened conversation Dr. Elliotson suggested that the experiment with the nickel should be tried once more. This proposition was consented to; and during the performance of

the experiment Dr. Elliotson remained in the other room, while Mr. Wakley, Mr. Herring, and Mr. Clarke, went to the patient to renew the operation. Again was the nickel handed privately to Mr. Clarke, and the lead and farthing were applied as before, with the pasteboard held in front of the patient's face. In three or four minutes there was a re-appearance of the flushed countenance, the staring eyes, the rigid limbs, the bent back, and the distorted frame, although *no nickel had been used*—nothing, in short, but the lead and the farthing.

"A report of these results was conveyed to Dr. Elliotson and the gentlemen who had remained with him, when Dr. Elliotson said that the occurrence was most extraordinary; that he could not at that moment account for it; and that he had no doubt that an explanation could soon be found which would remove all appearance of anomaly in the results. He would, he said, again suggest that the nickel

should be re-employed; and as this request was so urgently made, Mr. Herring, Mr. Wakley, and Mr. Clarke, again visited O'Key, for the purpose of proceeding with the trial, but, instead of using the nickel, the lead and farthing were again employed, with the same results as before. There was another fit. Afterwards, when the girl had recovered from the apparent paroxysm, Mr. Wakley suggested that the magnetised nickel should be rubbed over both hands freely, on the skin, in different places, but not exactly in the manner in which the lead and farthing had been employed. No effect was produced by this application of the nickel.

"On hearing a further report of the effects which appeared to arise from the use of the lead and the farthing, and the absence of effects when the nickel was really used, after the other experiments had been concluded, Dr. Elliotson candidly admitted that he 'could not explain

how the thing had occurred; it was most extraordinary, but still he had not the slightest doubt that the whole would yet admit of a satisfactory explanation.'

"Mr. Wakley, on the other hand, contended that what had been done was, in his opinion, perfectly conclusive with reference to the character of the supposed phenomena, and that he did not consider that a single additional experiment could ever be necessary in connexion with such an inquiry.

"Similar experiments, and with similar results, were again made on the 17th, and Jane O'Key, the other sister, also subjected to scrutinizing trials with Mesmerised water, sovereigns, &c. &c."

In reference to these experiments Dr. Elliotson gives the following explanation: "Mesmerised nickel produces upon the elder sister the most violent effects, which none but a very ignorant person could consider pretended. *Now when this, or gold, or silver, has been rubbed upon a*

part, and the friction has been desisted from before the effects come, or the effects have come and have ceased, they may be at once excited in the former case, or re-excited in the latter, by friction of the parts with any thing—a piece of wood or a piece of lead; and this excitement may be produced again and again. Friction was performed with lead upon parts to which nickel had been applied, either with or without effect, as it might be, and the effects took place violently." . . . "The editor" (of the Lancet, continues Dr. E.) "knew that I was about to leave London that same day for an absence of six weeks on the continent, and yet he could not wait for my return, and give me an opportunity of further research; but, with that ungentlemanly delicacy for which he and his friends are so remarkable, published almost immediately what professed to be an account of what he had seen,—a most imperfect and worthless account, however. In his plenitude

of scientific importance, he declared that not one more experiment on magnetism would ever be required; and answers which were sent were never published."*

This explanation and defence of Dr. Elliotson we give, and leave them to the judgment of the reader to decide as to their admissibility. Dr. Jones, of Southampton, defended the experiments, and thought it to be possible that Mr. Wakley's judgment might have been "biassed by previous disbelief." Many others came forward on the same side of the question; but the facts, conjoined with an instance of attempted imposition in France, which will be given hereafter as belonging to the period now under consideration, made an impression rather unfavourable to the subject upon the public mind as well as upon scientific individuals.

Previous to these experiments by Mr.

* Elliotson's Phys., p. 1183.

Wakley, animal magnetism, by its accredited effects on the O'Keys, was in the ascendant, and had been gradually winning to itself the testimony of men renowned for honesty and discrimination. Amongst them, and foremost, we may place Mr. Mayo, whose prejudices against it were overcome by Dr. Elliotson's and the Misses O'Key's performances at the North London Hospital, and who became a zealous convert to and commenter upon the doctrine of Mesmeric agency. In giving an account of Mesmerism, Mr. Mayo commences by saying, "that many of the effects which I have to mention are such as I should have given no credit to, unless I had seen them repeatedly produced (so that they were evidently reproduceable at pleasure), not by one or two only, and by the initiated, but by several, including myself, indifferent spectators, and that under such a variety of circumstances as entirely to do away with the possibility of deception. Different

persons arrive at conviction upon points of questionable probability in different ways: some are most influenced by authority; with myself, I will frankly admit, in the present instance, authority went for nothing. The facts which had been narrated to me appeared perfectly incredible till I saw that they were certain."

After going through masses of physical evidence, Mr. Mayo's conviction of the reality of Mesmerism is rendered so firm, that he not only does not hesitate to state his belief to that effect in the most unequivocal terms; but goes on to predict its inroad upon the good opinion of British surgeons in general. These are Mr. M.'s words—

"I build the belief, which I fully entertain, that Mesmerism will not again fall into discredit, upon the circumstance, that now in many of its phenomena there is recognizable the working of a determinate physical influence, the laws of which are susceptible of, and are actually re-

ceiving, inductive development. I build my confidence further upon this circumstance, that Mesmerism is now beginning to be investigated by English physicians and surgeons, and that there is a force of good sense and genuine science, the thing, perhaps, more than the pretension, in the followers of Harvey and Hunter, which enables them, in their own studies (like the followers of Locke in metaphysics), to obtain just and philosophic conclusions in fields of inquiry where some of their neighbours become bewildered in profitless and visionary speculation." . . .

"Finally," says Mr. Mayo, in another letter, which shows his consent to the full demands which were made upon his belief, "this state of trance" (Mesmeric catalepsy) "is the condition in which the patient may be led to talk of herself, of the changes which are to follow in her health, and to predict their occurrence. Here it is evident that the imagination steps in to a greater or less extent, to

furnish the patient with anticipations of what is to happen to her, or to be done for her relief."

Mr. Mayo claimed for Mesmeric sleep a wide distinction from ordinary sleep, and entered fully into the subject in an essay entitled, "On the Powers of the Roots of the Nerves in Health and in Disease; and on the Magnetic Sleep."

The following facts Mr. Mayo observed so frequently amongst the phenomena of Mesmerism, that he appears to regard them as the fixed and essential peculiarities of its operations.

The Mesmeric "influence depends upon the proximity and motion of the hand of the operator, and cannot be effected by mere motion and intention.

"The effect produced depends upon the quantity of surface used to Mesmerise.

"The Mesmeric influence shown in the production of coma may be conveyed

from one person in the state of somnambulism to another.

"The Mesmeric influence will not travel through a person not in the state of somnambulism, but from one Mesmeric somnambulist to another.

"The Mesmeric influence, shown in the production of muscular movements, may be conveyed from one person in the state of somnambulism to another."

About this time, Mesmerism gained another powerful supporter in Dr. Sigmond. "Finding," says the doctor, "that two distinguished members of the profession, Dr. Elliotson and Mr. Mayo, thought the subject worthy their attention, I persevered in my observations; and, added to this, I was invited by an illustrious individual whose regard for the medical profession, and for every thing connected with it, I have, from my official position, had opportunities of witnessing and admiring.

"The most remarkable case that has

fallen under my observation, and which, while it excited in me great anxiety, and the deepest interest, has taught me to prosecute my researches with extreme caution, has occurred to me within the last two days. I was enjoying the hospitality of a most amiable family in Fitzroy Square, when animal magnetism became the topic of conversation, and I related the trials I had already made. One of the young ladies proposed to become the subject of experiment, to which I very willingly assented; for, having on former occasions attended her during momentary sickness, I was fully aware of the natural strength of her constitution, and the absence of that nervous temperament which renders this system totally inapplicable. I began what are technically called 'the passes.' They, as is not unusual, excited laughter and incredulity. I proceded for about five minutes, and then stopped and inquired if any sensation was produced, and the

answer was, 'a slight sleepiness;' and ridicule was again thrown upon the subject. I recommenced the manipulations; I observed the eyelids falling, and at last they closed; but, as the same incredulous smile remained, I persevered for three or four minutes, when I, almost doubting whether any influence had been produced, inquired what the feelings were; to this no answer was returned. I found my young friend was in the most complete trance I had ever yet witnessed as the result of my magnetism. The stupor was most profound; and I then tried the usual means to arouse her, but they were vainly exercised. After a few minutes I found the hands become icy cold, the face lost its natural hue, and became perfectly pallid; the extremities became quite cold; the respiration was imperceptible; the stimulus of light did not affect the eye; on speaking to her a faint smile was excited, and a quivering of the lower jaw, which seemed to indicate a

wish but an incapability of answering; the pulse became gradually feebler, whilst the external appearance altogether bore such a decidedly deathly cast, that naturally some apprehension was excited amongst her family, by whom she was surrounded. Of course I could not but feel a certain degree of anxiety and regret that I had produced such a state, and much uneasiness at the thought that I had inflicted a moment's alarm to my kind friends. These feelings were, however, less acute, from the full knowledge I entertained that the family had long reposed the most perfect confidence in me, and that no member of it had that nervous susceptibility which would have embarrassed me had any untoward accident presented itself.

"I placed the perfectly unconscious subject of this distressing scene in a horizontal position, and directed the application of warmth and of friction to the extremities. Circulation and animal heat

were gradually excited, but she presented a most singular appearance of suspended animation. In this condition she remained more than four hours, for I had commenced a little after ten in the evening, and it was about half-past two, that, on some slight effort being made to rouse her, she uttered some of the most piercing shrieks I have ever heard; there were convulsive efforts to raise the limbs; the face, too, became convulsed; she opened her eyes and stared wildly around; she was placed in the upright posture, and seemed sensible. Advantage was taken of this circumstance to carry her to her apartment; before, however, she could reach it, she fell into a profound slumber, but its character was more natural. She was placed in her bed, appearing perfectly composed; the countenance had acquired its natural hue; the respiration was perfectly easy, and the pulse natural. In this state she remained during the whole of the day, until nine o'clock in

the evening, once only opening her eyes, and addressing a few words to an anxious and affectionate sister who never left her side. In the evening the young lady joined her family, perfectly restored to her wonted cheerfulness. She expressed no complaint whatever. She stated that the feelings that first came over her were those of extreme quiet and repose,—a species of ecstasy,—a gradual languor seemed to steal over her; that she heard something passing around her; felt an inclination, but an utter impossibility, to reply. The first waking up she, however, described as almost terrific. It was as if she was bursting from a narrow and confined space, and as if she arose from interminable darkness. The lesson that I have thus learnt will not be lost upon me.

"The art seems to me to consist in obliging the individual again to inspire, by the nostril, the carbon he has already expired, whilst the currents of air caused

by the extended fingers produce some effect upon the facial nerves, thus inducing the eyelids to fall down. . . . I have now exercised this art upon nearly a hundred persons, and with very general success in the fairer part of creation; I have quieted delirium and given sleep where it has been for many nights vainly solicited."

In another lecture, Dr. Sigmond speculates on the possibility that these phenomena may yet be traced to some undiscovered "emanation from the body," analogous to the phosphorescence of some animals, the odoriferous exhalations and electricity of others; and that "a nervous electricity may be found amongst those wondrous phenomena which the industry and the sagacity of the medical profession have turned to the benefit of their fellow beings, and to the increase of human happiness."*

* Lancet, 1837—38.

At a meeting of the Medico-Botanical Society, on the 23rd of May, 1838, Earl Stanhope in the chair, Dr. Sigmond related a case of clairvoyance, which, however, did not come under his own observation, but which he was made acquainted with by another physician (nameless). This physician had been treating a woman named Perry for an intermittent disease by Mesmerism: during the state of Mesmeric sleep, she was asked what would cure her. She replied, "The same medicine that was employed by Dr. Sigmond." "What is the medicine?" "A red medicine." "Vegetable, mineral, or animal?" "It is a mineral; I know you have it in your house; it is the sixth bottle on the second shelf in your medicine chest." The bottle alluded to contained the ammonio-chloride of iron, which was administered; and by it the patient was cured. The medicine had been before given to her by Dr. Sigmond with the same success.

Dr. Macright was called upon by Dr. Sigmond, and attested his statement. Dr. M. said, "That the physician under whose care this patient was, had never given the ammonio-chloride of iron in his life, and that he did not even know on what shelf it was in the medicine chest. The patient had never been in the house where the chest was kept, which was always under lock and key." Dr. Macright became for a time an open and steady believer in Mesmerism. "He had seen," he says, "all the phenomena which were mentioned in Dupotet's book, with the exception of the reading at the stomach. Imagination, in his opinion, had nothing to do with the effects produced, for he had seen cases of furious delirium quieted and cured by this agency in a few minutes.

The "Journal des Débats" about this time gave publicity to a case, which combined with the exposures in the North London Hospital already related, to

bring Mesmerism into temporary disrepute.

M. Burdin, a member of the Royal Academy of Medicine, being desirous of testing in a positive manner the pretensions of Mesmerised somnambulists, proposed to give a reward of 3000 francs to any individual who could read without the assistance of the eyes. The challenge was accepted by a M. Pigeaire, a physician of Montpelier, who alleged that his daughter, a child of thirteen years of age, had frequently exhibited this phenomenon in the presence of many medical men. A committee was appointed to witness the experiments, and to report thereupon. It will be seen from the report of the committee, which we shall alone be able to give, that the whole was an unsuccessful juggle. The report was as follows :—

" 1. That the precautions employed by the magnetizer " (her father) " were not

sufficient to prevent the successful exercise of trickery.

"2. That M. Pigeaire refused to acquiesce in the employment of the various innocent precautions which the committee thought it right to propose.

"3. That during the single exhibition at which the committee assisted, they had become convinced that Mlle. Pigeaire could never read with her finger unless she *was placed in such a condition* that some portion of luminous rays could pass between the lower edge of the bandage and her nose.

"4. The committee therefore declared that Mlle. Pigeaire was not entitled to the prize of 3000 francs."

It is but fair to state that a stormy discussion ensued after the report had been read, in which Delons, Cloquet, and Adelon accused the reporter of having given a very meagre and unsatisfactory account of the proceedings, and still stated their belief in these miracles of

Mesmerism. A detailed account of the occurrence is to be found in the Lancet for the year 1838.

In 1836, the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, M.A., of Cambridge, whilst at Antwerp, previously a disbeliever in Mesmerism, was converted by the extraordinary results of Mesmerism to which he was an eye-witness. Mr. T. returned to England in the spring of 1837, and described the wonderful phenomena which he had witnessed on the continent. "Some swore," says Mr. T.,

'Twas strange—'twas passing strange.'

And others that

'Twas pitiful—'twas wondrous pitiful.'

A few, more sagacious than the rest, surmised that it savoured of the *black art;* and the ladies thought, indeed, that 'the *naughty* man *might* have something to do with it.' One or two confessed that they were too old for the

introduction of new ideas into their brains,—and I fully believed them when they said so. More distant acquaintances listened to my story with a look of polite incredulity;— others yawned." At Cambridge Mr. T.'s success in Mesmerising the graduates, under-graduates, bachelors, and young ladies, was very great; instances of which, in a work entitled "Facts in Mesmerism," abound, but which our space will not permit a selection from. Suffice it to say, that amongst them are many remarkable cases of sleep-waking and clairvoyance; but his success in producing these conditions in their higher types, appears to have been greater amongst our continental neighbours than the inhabitants of our own isle. The following is but a specimen of Mr. Townshend's success in the production of the higher features of Mesmeric clairvoyance. "I wrote in my pocket-book (holding it over a somnambulist's head) the words 'Voulez vous aller

à Milan?' I then presented the writing immediately to his occiput. He immediately called out, 'Oh! je vois le nom d'une grande ville!' and then word by word he seemed to make out the whole sentence, which he at length repeated correctly."

In the years 1837 and 1838 animal magnetism in England was at its zenith; and the demonstrations of Dr. Elliotson, which were, from time to time, attended by Drs. Grant, Lardner, and Lindley, Professor Graham, Dr. Roget, Mr. Mayo, Professors Faraday, Wheatstone, and other men of science, together with the zealous partizanship which was shown by members of the medical profession whose names have been given, led to the formation of a committee of the Fellows of the Royal Society, to investigate the phenomena. This committee was interrupted in its proceedings by a disagreement between its members and Dr. Elliotson as to the terms on which their observations should

be made. Dr. E. demanded that either himself or his assistant should be present at each interview between the committee and the girl O'Key, who was to be the subject of their experiments, a condition to which the committee refused to assent.

About this period animal magnetism began again to lose favour in England; Baron Dupotet, left Bedford Square for the continent in the year 1838, in a manner that proved detrimental to the cause with which he had been so profitably identified. At the North London Hospital its declension was evinced by the system of petty annoyances which Dr. Elliotson, in the performance of his official duties, and more especially in the investigation of his favourite subject, had to encounter; which at length led to a resignation of his connexion with that institution.

One votary after another has since tacitly sepulchred his vow in the "tomb of the Capulets:" but Dr. Elliotson, with an unflinching persever-

ance, and (we sincerely believe) in obedience to an unshaken conviction of the reality of animal magnetism, has remained its firm supporter; and we find that within the last six months he has recorded the following determination: "I will now stand more ridicule, with the same firmness, and the same silent pity or contempt which I have always felt for my opponents, till I see, as I shall, the truths of Mesmerism established." In his work on "Human Physiology," Dr. E. has treated of Mesmerism as one of the subjects naturally included under that branch of science; and after detailing his own observations, at length sums up in the following language.

"These are the phenomena which I have witnessed. To ascribe them to emotion and fancy, to suppose collusion and deception, would be absurd. They must be ascribed to a peculiar power; to a power acting, I have no doubt, constantly in all living things, vegetable and animal,

but shown in a peculiar manner by the processes of Mesmerism. I have witnessed its power at least three times a week for two months: and should despise myself if I hesitated to declare my decided conviction of the truth of Mesmerism."

We have on more than one occasion been privileged with the opportunity of witnessing Dr. E.'s Mesmeric experiments; and have much pleasure in offering our feeble testimony to the studied attempts made by the doctor to prevent the very semblance of delusion. On one occasion, a healthy-looking and interesting young woman was, after a few minutes' magnetizing, thrown into a state of cataleptic rigidity, which to many men of eminence present offered an enigma, which it was impossible to solve by any resources that imposture could afford. At the will of the operator her senses were unfettered, but she was quite ignorant in her waking state of what had occurred during her mysterious sleep.

This history must be concluded with the recent debut of M. Delafontaine, at the Hanover Square Rooms. The professions of this magnetiser do not appear to have gone beyond the production of a state of coma, in which the patient is insensible to extraordinary stimuli, such as the fumes of sulphur when applied to the nostrils, violent electric shocks; and to painful inflictions. His exhibitions commenced on the 19th of July, by some Mesmeric feats on a lad apparently about seventeen or eighteen years old. He was seated in an arm chair, when, after taking off his left hand glove, the operator drew a chair to the right of the youth, and placing his *left* upon the apex of the youth's *right* thumb, and two fingers on the fleshy part of the ball, the operator looked him fixedly in the face. A few minutes passed, during which the lad's throat appeared to be in a state of spasmodic agitation, and he sank into *a kind* of sleep, apparently accompanied with a

total loss of consciousness. The neck was rigid, whilst the remaining parts of body maintained the usual flaccidity, the countenance remaining as placid as it was before the operation commenced. The next series of acts consisted in thrusting *very fine* pins into various parts of the body, applying strong hartshorn, and the fumes of lucifer matches, which had been lighted, to the nostrils, during which the patient, remained to all appearance totally insensible. Another manipulation of the magnetizer produced a state in all respects resembling catalepsy. The whole body became rigid, and his insensibility became so much increased, that he appeared to bear a powerful electric shock, which violently affected his whole system, without inconvenience. By a repeated renewal of the Mesmeric power, the lad remained for a long time subjected to such tests of insensibility as those already described, and bore them without betraying the slightest symptoms of consciousness. The persons

who had assembled were astounded at what they had witnessed, and the first day's performance passed off so favourably, that a public journal, previously hostile to the subject, stated, "that however the phenomena may be explained or attempted to be denied, there is one fact, of which there can be no doubt, namely, the incredible powers which the somnambulist possesses of resisting both voltaic electricity, and the electro-galvanic influence. In this *there could be*, there *was* no deception; and the fact that after the lecture, a gentleman, to satisfy himself of the strength of the voltaic pile, took hold of the wires, and was so stunned by the blow that he actually pulled the machine off the table, must set this part of the question at rest."—*Times*, July 20th.

Another exhibition followed on the 2nd of August, when M. Delafontaine commenced his experiments upon a girl probably of eighteen or twenty years of age. In a few moments she was asleep; and

during the repose evinced the usual amount of insensibility. So far the spectators were again satisfied.

For the 12th of August, M. Delafontaine advertised another Mesmeric display: the following account of which, from the pen of Dr. Edward S. Blundell, we copy from the Lancet, in whose talents and impartiality the most perfect confidence has long been reposed.

"At the repeated entreaties of a very nervous friend, I accompanied him to the Hanover Square rooms, on Thursday afternoon, August 12, to judge of the truth of the reports which were in circulation relating to the exhibitions there made, and with a determination of unmasking the tricks practised there, in case they deserved such treatment. We found M. Lafontaine operating on a deaf and dumb boy, in an arm-chair. The lad was very sullen, did not appear to relish his position, and in a few minutes began to cry. After half an hour's manipulation

the audience became very impatient, and requested that the child might be removed. The operator then bawled very lustily into the ears of the boy without causing him to start, and thereupon informed the company that 'il fut aussi sourd qu' auparavant.' In reply to the great dissatisfaction manifested at this failure, M. Lafontaine assured the company that he had *cured* a *great many* deaf and dumb people by animal magnetism. As soon as the boy was withdrawn, a young man himself mounted the platform, and seated briskly in the chair, as one who was quite at home; and the operator, waving his hands briskly about him, put him to all *appearance* into a profound sleep, in two minutes, and then told us that he was in a *fit state* to answer questions; when a gentleman in the middle of the room called out, 'May I ask whether that patient is not the young man who takes the cheques at the door?' To which M. Lafontaine answered in the affirmative,

and the audience burst out a laughing. The operator, nothing disconcerted, recommenced passing his hands, when the thighs and legs of his patient apparently became very stiff and straight. The manipulator then asked him several questions, such as 'Où avez-vous du mal?' 'Au creux de l'estomac:' He next pummelled him graciously with his fist—'à la façon de faire de pain,' with other sham experiments with spirits of ammonia, lighted matches under his nose, pins gently stuck into his forehead, &c., which he received with sufficient moral courage. The uninitiated were at first amazed, but others wanted *some truths*, said they were not satisfied, and requested the man to operate on a stranger from the crowd, when a young man, 'a fellow of one of the colleges of Cambridge,' sat for nearly half an hour before the magnetizer, who laboured with both hands to produce an effect, but in vain. He produced not the slightest. This young gentleman said he was a sleep-walker, and had come to

London to be cured of his somnambulism. A Mr. M'Kenzie, a surgeon, of Villiers-street, Strand, next took the chair, but the operator declared that he was not nervous, whereupon Mr. M'Kenzie thrust out his hand, saying, 'Not nervous? Look at that.' His hand trembled like a drunkard's, although I am sure that he was not one. Half an hour was then passed in staring at and manipulating him, but to no purpose; no effect was produced; and the operator declared that the attempt was a failure, for which he could not account. Another 'fellow of Cambridge' presented himself, and after fifteen or twenty minutes' hard labour, the operator again gave up, without producing any effect. I then requested the operator to put me to sleep, or give me some other indication of the power of the 'SCIENCE;' but he said that he was quite exhausted, which I can readily believe, as no man had ever worked harder for two hours. 'But,' said he, 'I will give you tickets of

admission for to-morrow, and then operate on any deaf and dumb patients, or on any one else.' A subsequent close examination of the cheque-taker in an adjoining room, convinced me that he was, and had been, voluntarily *acting a part* in the scene.

"On the next day, Friday, at the appointed hour, I went to the Hanover Square rooms, with two friends, who were very anxious to see me magnetized, and willing to become converts if he produced any effect on me. But on my arrival, I was astonished and indignant at a printed notice, that there would be no operations to-day, because the patient was too ill from yesterday's exhibition. Several gentlemen offered to be operated upon, but M. Lafontaine persisted in the excuse that '*the boy* was too ill?' Disgusted at this conduct, the audience, in justice to the public, held a meeting to express their feelings, by resolutions, on the subject; and after the Rev. Dr. Jenkins had declined to take the chair, on account of his

cloth, several voices called for a medical gentleman to preside, when I was recognized, with a request that I would do so, to which I consented; and the resolutions which were passed are to be found in the last page of the *Courier de l'Europe*.

"On that evening, one of the fellows from Cambridge, whom I recognised as having been operated upon on the previous day, waited on me, to request me to form one of a committee of medical and scientific gentlemen to give Lafontaine 'one more chance,' saying that he had not had fair play on Thursday, and that the non-attendance of to-day (Friday) was 'quite a mistake,' for which M. Lafontaine was very sorry, and hoped that *nothing would be published*. I replied, that I had no pique against him, but had attended with a determination to believe all that I saw, if credible, and that if, for instance, by producing unconsciousness, patients could easily undergo painful operations, something would be gained.

"I consented to attend, and arrived at No. 10, Pall Mall East, to meet the said committee, soon after one o'clock. Judge of my surprise at finding there only the operator, his interpreter, the cheque-taker, the fellow of Cambridge, and two strangers. M. Lafontaine then at once addressed me on the subject of my incredulity. I repeated what I had said on Thursday, that if he would produce any effect on me, or my friend, I would cease to be incredulous. He then requested me to sign a paper, a sort of certificate, which I refused to sign, or even read. Whereupon he ordered the cheque-taker to be seated; seeing which I immediately left the room, the parties following me down stairs, and requesting me to stay and see the effects of a powerful galvanic battery on the youth during the magnetic sleep. But I told the operator plainly, that if he had any value for his character, he would never again operate anywhere on the youth,—or, I might have added, on any

one else, as a magnetizer, at any time or place. He wholly refused at this meeting, also, to attempt to convince me by operating on the gentleman who acccompanied me."

Some parts of the foregoing account require explanation, which the following correspondence, published in the same number of the Lancet, will supply :—

"*To the Editor of the Lancet.*

"Sir,—From the sequel to the following letter, the public can form its own estimate of the professions of the professors of animal magnetism :—

'*To Monsieur Lafontaine.*

'Sir,—Having read a letter addressed by you to the editor of the *Times*, in which you state that, through the aid of animal magnetism, you had successfully removed the affliction of deafness from several individuals in Paris who had been born deaf and dumb, and that you had also offered to test the truth of your art or science at the Deaf and Dumb Asylum

in this city, but had not been successful in procuring a person for the operation, I beg most respectfully to state, that I have a fine healthy boy, turned of eight years of age (born deaf and dumb), whom I am willing to submit to your treatment, either before the public, during your exhibition, or privately, if more agreeable to yourself.

'In the event of a cure being effected, every means will be taken to give it publicity through the medium of the metropolitan and provincial press.

'As this will give you an opportunity of vindicating the usefulness of your labours in the cause of humanity, against the aspersions which have been so freely cast upon them, *especially by the medical faculty*, any communication, addressed as above, will be immediately attended to by, Sir, your most obedient servant,

'S. DONALDSON,

'No. 1, Saunders-street, Union-street, Lambeth Walk.'

"The following reply (the original is French) was received to the above :—

'Sir,—I have received your letter, which informs me of your wish to have your deaf and dumb son magnetized. He is eight years and a half old. That is a favourable age. If you will bring him to me to-morrow, Wednesday, at two o'clock, I will see if he can be magnetized. I have the honour to be, &c.

'La Fontaine.

'10, Pall Mall East, August 10, 1841.'

"Accordingly I waited upon him with my boy at the time mentioned. Monsieur was expected in every minute. In his sitting-room I found a lady and gentleman waiting his return. Shortly afterwards he entered, with a profusion of bows, rung for his interpreter, disposed of the business of the previous visitors, and then turned to me and my son (the lady and gentleman still remaining), inquiring whether my child had been born deaf and dumb, or whether I could

ascribe his affiiction to any accident. On receiving satisfactory answers, he wished to know if I had a medical certificate, stating the nature of the child's deprivation." After some conversation between the magnetizer and Mr. D., "the lady and gentleman rose to withdraw, and I was following their example, when M. Lafontaine motioned to me to remain. Now left by ourselves, he went to the boy, and commenced passing his hands about and around the head and neck. At that time I was not aware that this was his *only mode* of operating, but it had no effect whatever on the boy, who only smiled in the operator's face at the absurdity of the motions. He then again rang for his interpreter, to tell me once more that I *must* get a certificate from some gentleman connected with the *Times*, and call on him again on the same evening at eight, or at nine o'clock on the following morning, Thursday, the day of public exhibition, at the Hanover Square rooms.

Feeling quite hopeless, I inquired if he could cure the child, supposing that I did obtain such a document. He shrugged up his shoulders, extended his arms, and brought them slowly in a line with his body, with an air of mystery in his countenance, which his interpreter translated into 'he could not tell.' I now thought it was time to make my bow, which I did, with the determination of giving the professor no farther trouble. But it seems that he was not desirous of parting company thus unceremoniously, for I was waited upon by him and his interpreter, at between one and two o'clock on the following day, at the printing office, he begging that I would *not disappoint him, as he had advertised the appearance of the boy on that very day!*

"Although I felt considerable reluctance in making a show of my poor child, I considered that I had pledged myself in my letter, and felt bound in honour to acquiesce; although I had great reason

to regret it afterwards,—some of the company insinuating that I had brought him forward from mercenary motives, and others that I was in collusion with the foreign charlatan. Indeed, I believe that one half of the company went away with the impression that the child was neither deaf nor dumb (although inspected and certified to be both by several medical gentlemen who were before them), from his suddenly starting when a portion of a percussion cap struck him on the neck. It would be superfluous for me to do more than allude to the mortifying failure of the impostor in this instance, and in that of the three gentlemen who voluntarily submitted to his mummery for half an hour each; but it is a duty which I owe to the public to contradict the abominable falsehood which was alleged as a reason for M. Lafontaine's not appearing at his exhibition on the next day, Thursday, namely, '*because* (as his notice intimated) *the boy was unwell.*' I left the room on

Wednesday, in disgust, before the exhibition terminated, determined that he should not have an opportunity of again attempting to impose upon the public through the medium of my boy as 'a draw.' The next deception is announced for Wednesday, and if the performer is then forthcoming, he has more assurance than I at present give him credit for. I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

"SAMUEL DONALDSON."

It is but just to M. Delafontaine, to state, that he has, since the occurrences now related, publicly repeated his experiments with the usual measure of success, and *is*, whilst we write, continuing them.

The brief sketch of animal magnetism which has been given, as complete as the space would permit, and (it is believed) sufficiently in detail to afford the means of forming an opinion as to its true nature,

will, for that purpose, require some little analysis, in order that its integral structure may be correctly appreciated. The phenomena attributed by its advocates to Mesmeric agency, have been so "passing strange" as to render it a subject admirably well adapted for purposes of fraud; and we accordingly find that its history abounds with instances in which it has been thus complimentarily misused. —Some have been glaring as the noontide sun; others, less patent, have required much skill and ingenuity for their detection;—whilst, without doubt, some yet exist, so ingeniously contrived, as not only to elude scrutiny, but even to forbid suspicion.

The theory of magnetism now most generally admitted, is, that there exists universally diffused, "an elastic ether, modified by the nerves, and the conduction of which depends on their condition; which can be thrown into vibration immediately by the mind of man, and mediate-

ly by the nervous system; which manifests itself when thrown out of equilibrium, and produces mental effects through unusual stimulation of the brain and nerves." *

Hence it would appear that the ancient doctrine of the "Anima Mundi" is still retained, and with slight modification, the correlative hypothesis of bodily polarization; for Mr. Townshend states that "there is every reason to conclude that the principle of Mesmeric action is a disturbance of equilibrium, and that its mechanical effects may be all explained by differences of positive and negative, of plus and minus, in the magnetizer and his patient." †

The modes by which the disturbance of this equilibrium is produced, and the animal organization affected, so as to exhibit the required phenomena, have been various. Mesmer, it has been

* Townshend, p. 497. † Ibid. p. 496.

stated, first used mineral magnets, then his hands, but from his wholesale practice was obliged afterwards to substitute the "magical tub," described at pages 29 and 30. Numerous other media have at different periods been employed, from the supposition that every object in nature is, to a certain degree, magnetic, and therefore capable of imparting and conducting the *fluid*. At one time a concentrated effort of the will was deemed equally efficacious, and the communication was made by means of the organs of vision, the patient being required to sit in opposition to, and with his eyes intently fixed on those of the magnetiser. In accordance with the system now adopted, the operator usually presents his hand with all the fingers pointed to the surface of the body, in the manner which would be suggested by the notion that the magnetic fluid is made to pass from their points. Sometimes the hand and finger of the magnetizer thus extended are steadily

presented to the head, the shoulder, over the eyes, or some other part of the body of the patient, for a length of time, more or less, without moving, until the expected effects begin to be manifested. At others, the hands are passed in a certain direction, and after carrying them back to their first position, the operator repeats the same movement again and again, with the fingers pointed towards the body of the patient. *These* motions of the hands are called *passes*, and are made in every direction, at the choice of the operator. Some magnetizers have proceeded by contact, friction, or pressure, the *hands* being pressed or rubbed on the person to be affected; but these processes have fallen into disuse.

The effects on the patient have been divided into six stages, viz.; in the

First, An agreeable feeling of warmth pervades the whole frame, accompanied by a redness of the skin, slight twitches, spasms, and sense of lightness, such as is

produced by the action of a gentle stimulant.

The second stage is termed the *imperfect crisis* or *half-sleep*, in which the senses retain their activity, with the exception of that of vision, which becomes irresistibly dull.

The third is characterized by a state of *coma*, or lethargy, in which all susceptibility to external impressions, such as pricking with pins, &c., is lost by the organs of sense, the body itself remaining flaccid.

The fourth is termed the *perfect crisis*, or *somnambulism*, from its presenting the ordinary phenomena of natural sleep-walking, in which the patient is alive to himself but not to the external world. It is described in Macbeth.

"*Doctor.* You see her eyes are open.
"*Gentlewoman.* Yes; but their sense is shut."

The fifth is more rarely produced; under its influence the patient, still asleep, is gifted with the power of becoming

intimately acquainted with his own organization, and that of any other person placed in magnetic contact with him; of predicting coming maladies; and prescribing the remedies for their cure or prevention. This is termed clairvoyance.

The sixth is still more rare and wonderful; during its continuance the highest powers of clairvoyance are manifested. To the patient the universal fluid, which is every where diffused, becomes so lucid, that the faculties described as belonging to the fifth stage have no limited sphere of action. The somnambulist can acquaint himself with circumstances affecting persons at any distance; and the events of the past and future become laid open to him. Thus, Dr. Klein says that the death of the late King of Wurtemberg was predicted by a clairvoyant somnambulist four years before its occurrence, and that the event was fulfilled in all its particulars.

The stages of sleep, or coma, and

somnambulism, have not excited interest from their novelty, but on account of their presumed dependence upon magnetic agency. From time immemorial the same and analogous phenomena have been known to display themselves under certain conditions of the organization, and have been ascribed to causes acting upon it through the medium of the imagination in a state of undue or morbid excitement. This conclusion, in many instances, Mesmerists have disputed; maintaining that the true cause of such phenomena is to be found in the operations of their universal fluid; and opinions favourable to such a view have been expressed by Gall, Cuvier, Andral, and many other men of talent and integrity. John Hunter, however, in this country sided against the Mesmerists, and contended, from what he had seen, that the imagination was solely responsible. From examples which have been given, it must be granted that the process

of Mesmerising does in a limited sense influence the body; but the question recurs, Through what medium? Magnetizers argue that the processes clearly demonstrate a transit of some invisible agency from themselves to the patient; but, in reply, the effects do not invariably require a process of that kind for their production, nor any other from which such a conclusion can be warranted. Between magnetic and natural somnambulism there appears to be but little, if any, distinction; and whilst it may be, as sleep is, induced by a series of lulling sounds or movements, it is as often, or more frequently, produced in the ordinary course of nature. The difference between the two states comprehended in the first three stages of magnetic influence, is merely that all the mental faculties, except the fancy, repose during the continuance of sleep: in sleep-walking some of the external senses are asleep, others are awake, whilst all the faculties of the

mind are actively engaged in a dream. A celebrated physiologist, Richerand, states, during somnambulism "you can direct at pleasure the intellectual action. Thus you will make him that talks in his sleep speak on what subject you choose, and steal from him the confession of his most secret thoughts."*

Supposing such a medium or influence to exist, it may be fairly presumed from analogy that it is every where of the same intensity, and in the same quantity, excepting when, as Townshend states, its equilibrium is momentarily disturbed. The electric fluid, accumulated in a jar of a certain size, would have precisely the same amount of power, if discharged upon an individual in Jamaica or Bombay, as in England; and the Esquimaux, with the Taheitan, would be similarly inconvenienced were they to shake hands over a galvanic battery in the Brazils. If, however, we survey the records of the activity

* Richerand's Physiology.

of the magnetic fluid, it will soon appear that there is something national in its availableness. Thus, if we make a classification of different nations according to the comparative susceptibility of its influence, which people inhabiting them have been found to exhibit, we should place them in the following order—France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy, America, England, Holland. We are thus forcibly reminded of the existence of national idiosyncrasies, and cannot but perceive that those parts of the globe have ever afforded the best soil for the culture of animal magnetism, which have become notorious for the imaginative character of their people.

That the imagination is equal to the production of such phenomena may be gathered from numerously recorded instances, which our limits will not permit us to quote. The well authenticated case of the man who was condemned to be bled to death is one of the most remark-

able. His eyes were bandaged, the arm tied, and pricked with a lancet; a stream of warm water was directed to be continually poured on the arm so as to resemble the flowing of blood; and although not a drop of the vital fluid escaped, the man died about the time and in the manner that he would have, had hæmorrhage actually caused his death. Again,

In 1798, Perkins, in Leicester Square, by his "metallic tractors," rivalled M. Lauterbourg in the number and marvellousness of his cures; and the tractors were supposed to be possessed of such virtues that he obtained a patent for and sold them at five guineas per pair. Two years afterwards Dr. Haggarth, of Bath, had some made of wood, and so painted as to resemble those of metal which Perkins had been so successfully using. These he applied in the same manner, for every disease, and with such astounding effects, that he was induced to write a work, entitled, "Of the Imagi-

nation as a Cause and Cure of Diseases, exemplified by Fictitious Tractors;" which brought Perkinism into woful and lasting disrepute. Dr. Holland, in an interesting chapter on the effects of mental attention on bodily organs, states that by an especial concentration of consciousness, "sensations of heat or cold, or other more vague feelings, on the surface of the body, may readily be created." "And in hysterical habits such effects may result from the same efforts, as may appear to belong to a more mysterious cause."*

It cannot, however, be concealed, that the sleep, or coma, which has taken place during the performance of Mesmeric passes, has in most, if not in *all* instances been *forced*, in contradistinction to its being *induced*, as by other causes. For instance, certain movements or sounds of a monotonous character, continued for a

* "Notes and Reflections," by Dr. Holland.

longer or shorter time, have been known to lull a person to sleep by the power which they possess, first to arrest, and then to weary the attention;

"The busy bees, with a sweet murmuring strain,
Invite to gentle sleep the labouring swain;"*

but they have not, to our knowledge, been known *irresistibly* to exert such an influence. Miss Romer, whilst at Vienna, submitted to be Mesmerised by "a skilful and experienced physician, Dr. C." She states that "she has no recollection of any thing that occurred during those experiments, except her own *energetic struggles* to resist the sleep that was stealing over her, and at last locked all her senses in oblivion."†

A consideration of the *class* of persons, over whom magnetism exerts such control may assist us in its explanation. These persons have marked affections

* Virgil.

† "Sturmer," by Miss Romer, p. 6.

of some part or parts of the nervous system, a fact which leads us to infer that coexistent with this forced submissiveness to an external influence, and standing to it in the relation of a cause, there may be some corresponding structural change or lesion, more or less cognizable, by which an enfeebled resistance, on the part of the organs of sense is made to yield to ordinary mental excitation, and a train of strange phenomena to result.

The solution of the fact alluded to, which has just been given, is purely hypothetical; whether it be correct or not, the fact remains, and offers an interesting field for further investigation. In this absolute control over the dormant powers of a certain class of persons, which Mesmerists have discovered their manipulations to possess, we cannot recognize the interference either of the imagination or will: but it requires further proof to convince us that it takes

place through the medium of an universal magnetic fluid.

The next point for discussion is the apparent occlusion of the organs of sense, manifested by somnambulists. "Again," says Mr. Townshend, "pins have been thrust into the flesh of healthy persons, during the Mesmeric slumber, and they have betrayed no mark of feeling. Now, in such cases it is plain that the nerves, which ordinarily convey sensations of touch to the mind, are as inefficient to propagate impulsions upward to the brain, as if they had been tied or cut. But wherefore? The nerves have been neither tied nor cut, they have undergone no alteration that we can perceive. What are we then to conclude, but that they have ceased to become conductors to some invisible force which is indispensable to their action?" *

This apparent absence of all sensibility

* Townshend, p. 503.

to external impressions, and particularly to those which have a tendency to produce a sense of pain, may arise from several causes. The first, from vigorous resistance for purposes of deception. The Florentine witches, we are told by Salveste, in his work, " Des Sciences Occultes," &c., in order to maintain their supremacy over the public credulity, were obliged to make it appear that they were endowed with supernatural energies; and amongst them was the power to prepare an ointment, which if they rubbed over *their own* bodies would render them insensible to pain. We are told by this author, of a woman accused of being a witch, who was brought for trial before a magistrate of Florence, a man in advance of his age and country. " She declares she is a witch, and asserts that that very night she will be present at the Sabbat, provided she is allowed to return home, and perform the *magical unction;* the judge allows it. After being rubbed over with fetid drugs, the pretend-

ed witch lies down, and immediately goes to sleep; she is bound to her bed; punctures, blows, and even cauterization, could not interrupt her deep slumbers."*

The second set of causes, or those to which we might attribute the same phenomena where imposture cannot be charged upon the patient, is the compression of the nervous filaments of sensation, and disturbance of the central nervous organ —the brain.

Throughout the whole animal system, myriads of minute nerves are distributed, whose functions consist in conveying to the sensorium any impression made on their extremities. In their course to the brain their relations are various, but all are in some parts so situated, that they may be more or less compressed by muscular and other contractile tissues, which abound in every part of the animal economy. The effect of such compression

* Vol. i. p. 7.

upon these nervous threads is to lessen their power as conductors; and, upon the system, to modify the sensations which any irritation of them may produce on the brain or sensorium. Now this insensibility (as far as we have been able to ascertain and observe) is most frequently coexisent with the cataleptic stage—a state in which the whole muscular and contractile tissues are put into a state of tense rigidity; from which it is obvious the nervous apparatus becomes so compressed that, as in some instances, a *high* degree of temporary insensibility may be obtained. We have witnessed again and again, during an attack of hysteria, a bottle of hartshorn applied to the nostrils;—the skin pinched—the hair *most violently* pulled—the tongue bitten—and noises made in the apartment, in order to arrest the attention of the patient, without being in the slightest degree heeded; and a singular coincidence between these attacks and the third stage of magnetic sleep exists in

the fact, that in both the patients are afterwards ignorant of what occurred during the paroxysm. Upon these considerations, we cannot refer these phenomena to any but ordinary physical causes.

The alleged phenomena of animal magnetism remaining to be noticed, if substantiated, imply the existence of laws whose operations throughout nature have been hitherto ascribed to the intervention of supernatural causes. We are required to believe in the power of seeing without eyes—of foretelling events—of becoming intimately acquainted with objects at a remote distance, and of others to which in a natural state a person has no means of access—of describing most obscure diseases, telling their remedies and termination. Instances are given, in which all these gifts have been possessed by individuals; and the extreme lucidity of the magnetic fluid has been made to explain the mysteries.

Of these assertions, again, impostors

have been known to take a temporarily successful advantage. Not long since, a boy was exhibited in London by his father, *a Scotchman*, who, it was pretended, was gifted with second sight. On being admitted into the room, the lad, without previous conversation with any one in it, invariably gave correct answers concerning objects which he could not see, nor had seen. The trick was afterwards exposed. The father always addressed the boy before the little fellow uttered a word; and began each successive sentence with a word, the first letters of which put together formed the answer. For instance:—If the object was of silk, the father might begin, "See now you speak correctly." "I know you will." "Look well before you speak." "Know what you are about." And indeed, where cases of this kind have met with severe scrutiny, as in that related at page 157, they have failed to convince the examiners. But not only so; the assertions are so completely

at issue with every ascertained law of nature, that unless they are supported by cases better attested than any we are in possession of, reason must, in this matter, be allowed to maintain her mastery over faith.

The objects of surrounding nature are endowed with certain qualities, to us appreciable through the medium of certain organs—the senses, and here we at once recognize relations which are found to exist throughout the moral as well as the physical world, viz.—the exact adaptation of the organ to the particular end it was designed to effect. Thus the different media which make up the greater part of the globe of the eye are, by their translucence, density, and form, exactly fitted to convey rays of light to the retina, but have no adaptation for the transmission of vibrations by which sound is produced. The universality of this exact relationship constitutes Order—"heaven's first law."

But let the converse be found capable of being brought about, in consequence of

the exercise of man's wisdom;—let the eye be made to smell, the toe to see, and the hand to taste:—harmony must give place to a second chaotic confusion, and unerring vicissitude to a condition of capricious instability.

Produce such a transference of function in that complex machine, the human body, and it is fair to infer that the constituent parts of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms are to be subjected to a similar mutation of their properties or qualities; that common salt, without any alteration in its component elements, may be made by this modern alchymy to exercise any one or all of the affinities which belong to the whole range of chemical agents; that platinum may be rendered pliable, brittle, of a lesser or greater specific gravity, by a less important act than that of breathing upon it; that pillows of downy softness may be made of flint-stones; and iron again transmuted into gold.

No such feats have been known to be performed by natural sleep-walkers; Castelli, a somnambulist, was found by Dr. Soane translating Italian into French, and looking out words in the dictionary. His candle being purposely extinguished, he immediately began groping about as any other person would who was left in the dark, and did not resume his occupation until he had re-lighted the candle at the fire. Many such instances are on record.

Again, were such a transference of senses permissible by the Great Architect of the human frame, it would in all probability be exercised where one or other of the organs of the senses was originally, or through injury has become, occult. A dislocated bone, if not restored to its socket, finds a new resting place, and generous nature exerts all her functions to make it useful, not unfrequently with such advantage as to render the new joint but little less serviceable than the

old. And in cases more closely connected with our subject, those who have been born or become blind, have had, after a long existence, no ideas that the exercise of the organs of vision would have been the means of transmitting to the mind; and although other senses have in such cases been rendered more astute so as in some measure to compensate, they have never been found to become so modified as to supply the loss of those that are occluded. Surely if nature is *not* at liberty to cause occasional departure from her laws for purposes of beneficence, in which she is so abundant, it is not to be supposed for a moment that it would be permitted at man's caprice, for purposes altogether inconsistent with the plans which the Almighty has been pleased to fix for the moral government of his creatures.

Again, this lucidity of vision has been boasted of in all ages. Persons *are said* to have been plunged into a death-like

stupor, and their unfettered minds have forsaken their frail tenements and wandered abroad, or exercised their powers of discernment upon their own organization, its defects, and its wants;—or they have sought the dim chronicles of old Time for transactions which have been only recorded there;—or have flown forwards through the long vista of futurity, and brought back with them the shadows of coming events: but yet from these visions, anatomical and physiological science has never gained a fact; antiquarian lore has not been enriched;—nor has *Mesmeric* prophecy stepped in to the assistance of human foresight with powers of prevision equally efficient with those which have to all appearance been occasionally displayed by the brute creation.

We are told of the prediction of fits by epileptics and hysterical persons. Dr. Cotta, in his "Discovery of ignorant Practitioners of Physick," cap. 8, relates

a story of "a parson's wife in Northamptonshire, anno 1607, that coming to a physician, and told by him that she was troubled with the sciatica, as he conjectured (a disease she was free from), the same night, after her return, upon his words, fell into a grievous fit of sciatica." Riccius states, that in China, "if persons are told that they shall be ill on such a day, when that day comes they surely will be ill, and sometimes so terribly afflicted that they have been known to die." So that presentiment may occur without the interference of Mesmeric influence, to an amount equally remarkable with that which in credible cases Mesmerism has been supposed to produce; and we cannot but refer such instances to the effect of imagination, and of that alone. Burton, in his Anatomy of Melancholy, well says, "I may certainly conclude that this *strong conceit* or *imagination* is *astrum hominis*, and the rudder of this our ship, which reason should steer, but, overborne

by phantasie, cannot manage, and so suffers itself and this whole vessel of ours to be over-ruled, and often overturned."*

In the foregoing pages the subject of Mesmerism has been briefly, yet (we believe) fairly treated. It still continues to excite attention, and to elicit vigorous enquiry in many parts of the world. Should it in the end be doomed as a fallacy, let it have the praise which is its due, of having instigated research upon a subject which had before called forth none. On the other hand, should it prove to be founded in fact, posterity will place it amongst the most brilliant discoveries of any age.

* Part i. sec. 2.

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